OUR BIBLE

HERBERT L. WILLETT.

APR 2 0 1961

OUR BIBLE

OTHER BOOKS *by* PROFESSOR WILLETT

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

THE RULING QUALITY

BASIC TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOKS (in collaboration with James M. Campbell, D.D.)

STUDIES IN THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

THE CALL OF THE CHRIST

THE MORAL LEADERS OF ISRAEL

OUR BIBLE

ITS ORIGIN, CHARACTER, AND VALUE

By

HERBERT L. WILLETT, Ph. D.

The University of Chicago

Within this sacred volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom the Lord has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born
Who read to slight, or read to scorn.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

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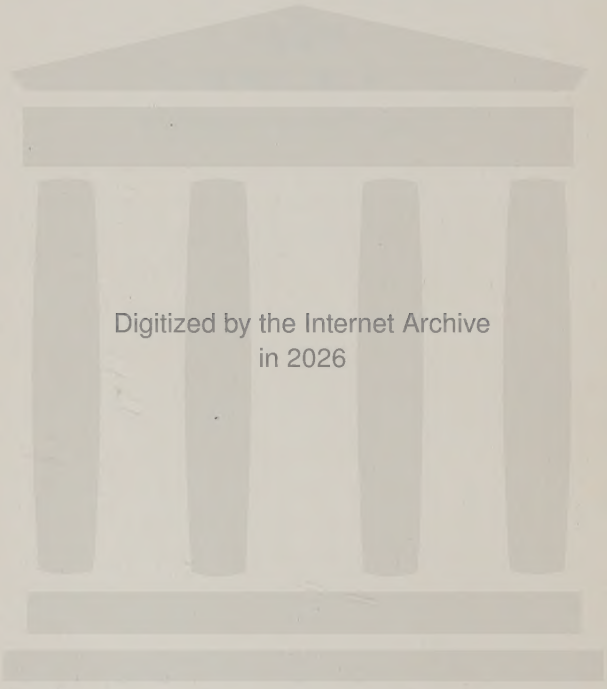
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PREFACE

ON the Syrian coast, north of Tyre and Sidon, there was in ancient times a city called Byblos. From this port Phoenician traders carried to the west the Egyptian papyrus, which was used for writing, and from which came our word "paper." The Greeks spoke of the rolls of paper on which their books were written as "biblia," after the name of the place from which the material came. From this custom of antiquity has come our word "Bible," which means literally "books." By habits of speech which were of gradual growth the word represents a particular collection of writings, the sacred literature of the Hebrew and Christian religions. The increasingly recognized supremacy of Christianity among the world's great faiths, and its widening influence among the nations have made the Bible the most conspicuous and impressive of books.

The story of its origin and varying experiences through the centuries has profound interest for all intelligent students of its contents. Not without some understanding of the manner in which these documents took form, and the adventures of transmission and translation through which they have passed on their way into our possession, can modern readers of the Bible gain an adequate knowledge of its character and value. This great Book comes to us in many different forms. It is available in several hundred

languages, to meet the needs of missionary expansion. In the English tongue it is offered in a score of renderings and editions, all of which have values of their own, and among which it is often difficult to choose. Behind these various versions of the Holy Scriptures there lies a vast amount of consecrated and scholarly labor,—the labor of authors, revisers, editors, copyists, translators, archaeologists, critics, commentators, and other scholars. To the student who wishes to understand the meaning and value of the Bible some competent knowledge of these labors is essential. Upon these elemental inquiries into the origin and history of the Scriptures, the larger questions relating to their inspiration, authority, influence and value naturally rest.

It is the purpose of this book to answer some of the most obvious and insistent questions which are sure to arise in the minds of all thoughtful people who deal with the Bible. Alike for those who teach and those who read with awareness these inquiries are inevitable. On themes so vital to faith differences of opinion are unavoidable. The views presented in these chapters are believed to be in harmony with the assured results of reverent and constructive modern scholarship.

The literature available on the various phases of biblical study is extensive and rich. Some of the most usable books have been cited in connection with each chapter, under the appropriate chapter headings in the appendix on bibliography. The reader is urged to avail himself of these suggested helps as fully as possible.

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I.

Religion and its Holy Books

THOSE who make a study of human society and its chief interests are of the opinion that easily the most commanding of these interests is religion. This does not imply that it is everywhere so regarded, but that as history tells the story, and world-wide human activities reveal the facts, religion holds the foremost place.

Probably most people are not directly conscious of this fact. A score of other and apparently more vital concerns press in upon life and claim earlier attention. Food is a necessity, and its obtaining has absorbed the efforts of the race since the first adventures of the hunting path and the fishing pool. Mating, love, the sex impulse, and the desire for children have had their way from the times of cave man, and before. Clothing and shelter, and the development of family life have had their profound significance in the making of society.

Then have spread the social activities, work, tools, industry, herdsmanship, agriculture, social organization, clan relationships, group interests, seasonal observances, government, chiefs, law, custom, penalties, war, aggression, revenge, armament, discipline, trade, barter, traffic, travel, transportation.

These are but suggestions of the long and fascinat-

ing list of human interests that have given movement, form, color and charm to the life of the race. Yet it is not beyond proof that the greatest of the forces that has molded the social order into its many and diverse expressions is religion; the sense of higher forces, awe for the vast uncomprehended powers or beings pictured by the religious imagination, or interpreted by prophets, seers and sybils.

It would not be too much to say that wherever one looks, in any land or any century, there will be found holy men, holy places, holy ceremonies, holy books. If religion is not a universal characteristic of the race, the exceptions make the common experience all the more impressive. It has not always expressed itself in lofty and convincing forms; but the same charge can be made against art and law. We do not despise music because the savage plays upon a reed pipe, nor scorn government because of grafting officials. And religion is not to be judged by its inadequate expressions, but by its noble and inspiring embodiments.

Moreover, there is a direct relationship between the progress of religion toward higher levels and the enlargement of civilization in general. There have been times when men believed that the larger culture was to be hastened by the suppression or destruction of religion as a form of superstition. But these reactions have been of brief duration, and have soon given way to clearer vision of the facts. The race has found that it is a fatal error

to seek for the uplands of individual or social experience without the help of religion and its literature.

It is well to keep in mind this constant connection of religion and literature through all the centuries. Wherever the reverent spirit has attempted to find a way of access to the higher powers, it has recorded its aspirations in sacred writings. Of these some have survived, and found embodiment in collections that presently became classic to the confessors of the faith. Thus have the holy books of the world been made.

SACRED BOOKS

All the important religions have been in some measure related to such bodies of writing. Hinduism has its laws of Manu, its Vedic Hymns and its great epics, like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the most popular and authoritative scripture in India.

The teachings of Confucius, probably the most widely revered of all systems of instruction, less a religion than a body of moral precepts, are contained in a collection of classics including the five Webs or Threads, and the Four Books of Confucius and Mencius. These are the standard scriptures of the Chinese world, which embraces one-quarter of the human race.

Buddhism, sometimes called the Protestantism of India, now almost completely banished from the land of its origin, but the dominant faith of Burmah and Ceylon, and the most aggressive system of religion in China and

Japan, has its sacred books, the Pitikas in the Pali tongue, the holy texts that reveal the Eightfold Way.

The Parsees, those interesting and progressive representatives of the religion of Zarathustra, hold at high value the teachings of that Persian reformer, recorded in the Avesta in the Zend language, whose prayers the faithful repeat in the ancient speech no longer current, and by most of them quite unknown save by sound.

Judaism, gathering up its comments upon the Hebrew Scriptures, enshrined them in the Talmud, partly explanation and partly tradition, an amazing composite of fact and fiction, the holy book of the rabbinical schools.

Mohammed, the prophet of Mecca, wrote his meditations and instructions in chapters or suras, and the collection of these, known as the Koran, is the authoritative word of God to the hosts of the Moslem world.

These are but the more important illustrations of the intimate relationship existing between most of the world's faiths and the literatures in which they have found exposition and defense. The list is long.

THE SCRIPTURES OF ISRAEL

In a similar manner the messages of prophets, the institutes of priestly instruction, the philosophic reflections of sages, the hymns of saints and the dreams of apocalyptists in Israel were committed to writing, and some of them, age by age, were incorporated in that growing collection of sacred books called the Old Testament.

And just as the Hebrew religion gave birth to its classic Scriptures, the Jewish church produced the Talmud, and the Mohammedan movement voiced itself in the Koran, so Christianity gave to the world a group of writings—epistles, memoirs, instructions, defense and confident hopes—some of which were gathered into a body of documents which we know as the New Testament, and some of which found their place in secondary and apocryphal lists.

In all these instances the relation between the religious movement and its classic literature is intimate. In some cases the writings have priority over the organization with which they are associated, and constitute the foundation on which it rests. This is in large measure true of Confucianism and Islam.

In other and more frequent instances, the outbursting of a new religious impulse has produced alike a body of believers and a literature. This is true of Hinduism, Hebraism, Judaism and Christianity. Sometimes the relations have not been so intimate, as with the Greek and Roman cults, whose influence is felt in their literatures, but which gave rise to no distinctly religious writings. But in general it may be affirmed with emphasis that holy books go hand in hand with organized efforts to attain the holy life.

INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY

Most of these writings claim some sort of inspiration and authority. In the classic poems of Greece in which

the national faith is recognized, the singer conceives himself as inspired by deity to utter his message. The great ethical and religious teachers of antiquity were no less confident that they spoke with authority. Confucius and Socrates taught with assurance. "Thus spake Zarathustra," is a finality with the Parsee. The Koran goes even further. The writings of the Koriesh merchant on the leaves of the sacred tree were embodied in a book. At first it was sufficient to assert that Mohammed had thus spoken. Later the tradition grew up that the angel Gabriel inspired the words. And at last it came to be the accepted view of orthodox Moslems that the whole was written in heaven and handed down to the prophet by the messengers of Allah.

In the case of the Old Testament there was a similar growth of sentiment regarding the origin and divine character of the books. The prophetic writers conceived it to be their right and duty to gather, revise and correct the utterances of their predecessors in the teaching function of Israel. In the same spirit the priests of successive generations developed the legal institutes of the nation, in harmony with their advancing conception of their function as religious leaders. In fact, all the literature of religion, prophetic, priestly and philosophical, grew up with entire freedom among the Hebrews of the classic period. But when these writings were gathered into a collection by the editors of the Persian and Greek ages, they were invested with a sanctity and authority unknown

before, and a portion of the collection, the Torah or Five Books, was insensibly lifted by popular regard not only into the realm of the inspired and inerrant, but the divine. Little by little it was insisted that these writings were prepared in heaven, and mediated to Moses through ranks of angels. It was a far cry from the simplicity and naturalness of the earlier feeling regarding the records of the saints and teachers of Israel to this sublimated conception of a mysterious and unearthly book.

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

In the atmosphere of this deep reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures as inspired in a very solemn and far-reaching sense, the writings of the Christian community took form. In contrast with the older and authoritative Scripture, the letters and memoirs produced by the first believers in the gospel were regarded less as inspired utterances than as the prized words of the friends of the Lord. It was only by gradations that the quality of divine inspiration was affirmed of them, and their organization into a formal canon begun. No one in the early church thought of imputing to these documents any of the highly theological qualities of inerrancy and verbal sanctity which later centuries developed. It was enough for these first followers of Jesus to find in the apostolic writings the expression of the spirit of the Master, and a trustworthy narrative of his life and teachings.

And what is the value of the claim made by these

and the other sacred books of the various nations that they are the inspired and authentic record of the divine will? Is there reality in this belief, or are these high insistencies only the expression of an affectionate reverence for books that have become classic and precious? Is there validity in the claim which some writings make that they are the transcript of the divine mind? Are there holy books, in any other sense than that some of them have secured the character of sacredness through employment in connection with places and ceremonies held to be holy? And if there is value in the claim, how may one discriminate between the different books of religion? What is the secret of their sanctity?

GOD'S MESSAGES

The answer is not far to seek. All books that have aided in the achievement of higher levels of living for any portion of the race prove themselves by that fact and to that extent to be inbreathed of the divine life, the message of God to the world. The reality of the divine element in the various religions and their sacred books is proved by their character and results. This is the only conclusive test.

Among these writings some are of greater value than others, judged by their influence on the people who have been the subjects of their instruction. Their values are not to be measured by claims they make to inspiration and authority, for all alike insist upon their holy char-

acter, and some of the least significant are most urgent in their pretensions. The truth is only to be discovered by observing their effects upon the lives of their confessors.

Without anticipating in too large a degree the inquiries which are to be made in succeeding studies in this book, it may be said here that, judged by this standard, the Bible, particularly the New Testament, rises unique and supreme above every other writing of the centuries. Divested of every dogmatic presupposition, and stripped of every adventitious help such as the church has too often devised for its defense, the Book simply proves itself to be the supreme religious literature of the race, the record of the great ideals and imperatives of the spiritual life.

THE BIBLE'S SUPERIORITY

The Bible demonstrates its superiority to other books of religion by its record of the growth of the sense of worship from primitive and meager beginnings to its supreme embodiment in the life of Jesus.

It is the world's most impressive record of personal faith, sometimes in very imperfect forms, sometimes in fuller expression in the lives of apostles and prophets, and once in complete realization in the character of the Lord.

It is a collection of human books of greatly varying worth, but possessed as a group of a marvelous power to inspire human life with holy purposes.

It is a book of unique authority, incomparably more urgent than any other book in the world. Its authority

is not that of rules of conduct or of commands for obedience. Rather does it possess the power of self-evidencing principles of belief and behavior, taught and enforced by the holiest men of history, and by the Master himself.

It is the world's permanent moral and spiritual monitor. With astonishing frankness it reveals the sins to which humanity may descend. With convincing passion it urges the attainment of such holiness and purity as the world has seen realized but once. With supreme confidence it anticipates the embodiment of its ideals in a new spiritual order, attaining slowly but certainly the full measure of Jesus' hopes.

This is the ground of its claim to finality among the holy books of the world. Alike to hostile charges that it is only a collection of religious traditions, and to extravagant claims of inerrancy made on its behalf it remains silent and indifferent. Its vindication is found in its simple fidelity to its great purpose to aid in the creation of a new and diviner humanity. And in the increasing success with which it realizes this purpose, it finds the growing proof of its right to be called the Book of Books, the supreme and inspired literature of the ages, the Word of God.

II

How Books of Religion Took Form

RELIGION is older than any writing. It seems evident from what we know of the history of the race that long before there were any books, or even the art of writing was known, men believed in deity, and were at pains to express their belief in some sort of service.

Some of these manifestations must have been of a very simple type. Among the lowest of them were animism and fetichism. In these cases the objects of nature, or even the simplest of material forms, were invested with a magical character which made them potent for good or evil to the one who came in contact with them.

In most of the early religions certain spots were believed to be sacred, as the abode of divine beings or demons. Such places, stones, fountains or springs, groves or single trees, graves of holy men, river banks or mountain heights, were regarded with veneration, and believed to be inhabited by beings whose favor was to be sought and whose displeasure must be avoided.

Also, because of their relations to higher powers, as their servants or their embodiment, particular men and animals were believed to be holy. The members of some of the early priesthoods, religious devotees, hermits, ascetics, and the animal totems of many tribes, were so honored. In some parts of the non-Christian world these

strange expressions of the religious sentiment may yet be found.

Almost all religions have had certain sacred places, like Benares, Mecca, Jerusalem or Rome, to which the pious resorted to honor the memory of the founder of their faith, or some saint conspicuous in its history. Such pilgrimages were a notable feature of Old Testament times, and a recognized factor in nearly all religious movements.

In connection with all these and many other early features of religion, some form of ritual, simple or elaborate, was devised. Wherever there are worshippers, there something in the nature of sacrifice, confession, prayer, expiation, or some similar attempt to hold converse with deity, has been practiced. Oracles, shrines, and the ritual of worship are only the efforts of human beings to penetrate the mystery of divinity and find access to God.

WORSHIP EARLIER THAN WRITING

None of these simpler expressions of the religious life require a scripture. Men can worship without having any sacred book or documents of any sort. Long before the art of writing was known, all these forms of worship, and many others, must have been practiced. And long after men could write, the ritual of sacred places was probably transmitted from one generation of priests to another, with no thought of committing it to writing. In all the early stages of any religion, as the story of the

Christian church makes clear, men are not concerned to write. They make known their message by word of mouth. It is only after a time that they take thought about the making of books.

It is because of this fact that nearly all the early materials which later find their embodiment in the books of religion are handed on for a long time in oral and traditional form. They are repeated from one to another, and with the tenacity of a child-like memory of words, they are preserved with only slight changes for generations. Writing, though very old as a human achievement, is only a late means of enjoyment and diversion. In antiquity, few men knew the art, and the work was costly and laborious. To-day everyone writes, and the press multiplies the written pages with the swiftness of steam and electricity.

MEMORY RATHER THAN BOOKS

In the times when most of the world's sacred books began to take form, including the Old Testament, it was easier to remember than to write. Stories, poems, instructions were handed on from father to son, and from teacher to pupil. Scholars believe that the Homeric poems, the greatest classic of ancient Greece, were unwritten for many centuries after their composition, and yet have survived in fairly accurate form from that dim past. It was not otherwise with the earliest portions of Holy Scripture.

It seems probable that long before any of the books

of the Old Testament were written in the form in which we have them, there were many short and pithy sentences in the style of proverbs, aphorisms and oracles, that had taken their place in the common speech of the day, and passed as the current coin of conversation. The orient has always been fond of maxims, parables, quaint sayings in which the wisdom of the past was believed to be stored. Long before the Book of Proverbs was thought of, there were many such floating bits of wit and wisdom, as our oldest sources, like the books of Judges and Samuel, bear witness. Such riddles as the ones propounded by Samson at his wedding, such stories as the parable of the trees, hurled by Jotham at his arrogant brother, such proverbs as the one quoted by Zebah and Zalmunna to Gideon, were treasured in memory.

Then there were fragments of poetry, like the Sword Song of Lamech, the Song by the Sea, recounting the triumph of Jehovah over the hosts of Egypt, the Song of Deborah, and the song in celebration of David's victory over Goliath. With them must have been treasured the laments and elegies over famous men, like the dirges of David for Saul and Jonathan, and for Abner. Perhaps at some later time such fragments of national poetry were gathered into such a collection as the lost Book of Jashar, or The Book of the Wars of Jahveh, referred to but not included in the Old Testament. For centuries before there was any attempt to write down the floating poetry of remembrance, these and many other songs probably

passed about as the common possession of the Hebrew bards and story-tellers.

EARLIEST WRITINGS

It is impossible, of course, to be sure when the material which later went to the making of the Old Testament began to be written down. If one is to judge by the examples of other ancient people, it would seem likely that the laws that were taking form were written out, and, perhaps, displayed on tablets or carved on stones. Egyptian and Babylonian instances of this sort are familiar. The Ten Commandments, which were known as early as the time of Solomon as a written code of instruction, and probably go much further back as oral precepts, may well have found visible embodiment as the recognized form of popular direction. In the different forms in which these first laws of Israel were cherished as the words of Moses the man of God, they had an authority like that which was attributed to the utterances of Confucius, Zoroaster and Socrates by their disciples.

As soon as the interest in writing developed, and the body of worthful tradition exceeded the ability of men to remember, records of the poems, proverbs, parables and stories of the past were made and multiplied. Some sort of institutions that corresponded to the schools of later days grew up. This was the case in India, China, Persia and Greece, and there is no reason to doubt that it was also true of Palestine. Groups of the Wise met for dis-

cussion and instruction, and the words of the Sages were sought and treasured by their scholars.

But much more important, from the point of view of the growth of biblical literature, was the work of the Sons of the Prophets. At first these were the wandering seers, who went about in Israel, giving oracles, inciting the people to loyalty to their national faith, and in a rude fashion, interpreting the sanctions of religion. Gradually, under the leadership of saner and abler men, like Samuel and Elijah, they were localized in communities at certain of the more famous shrines, and became the first examples of the Schools of the Prophets, which later played so important a rôle in the story of education and religion in the land.

SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

In these schools the traditions regarding the great leaders of the past—Abraham, Moses, Samuel and the like—were preserved and used as the material of common instruction. The story of Jahveh and his mighty deeds in behalf of his people was rehearsed and written out. The world traditions of divine activity in the creation and discipline of the race were revised and adapted to Hebrew use. For the Hebrews were the children of the great Babylonian civilization, and the traditions of that ancient people were not unknown to them. To this fact is due the striking resemblance of the Hebrew stories of creation and the flood to those of the Babylonian cycle.

In such circles of instruction the preaching of the

prophets of the nation was the standard of instruction. The words of the leaderlike men whose names have become familiar to us as the moral and religious teachers of Israel, were carried out into the wider reaches of the national life by the members of these brotherhoods, and set down for the purposes of further study and later preservation in the schools of the prophets. A notable and wide-spread activity went on among these unknown servants of God, only fragments of whose labors have been preserved in the records of the Scriptures.

VARIETY OF LITERARY INTEREST

And if the prophets were busy with their task of studying, interpreting, recording and distributing the oracles of master spirits of their order, not less fruitful were the literary labors of the priests, the ministers of the sanctuaries. Each of these shrines was in some manner a school even before the days of the great reformation of Josiah. The growth of priestly ritual and torah began very early, and never ceased, though its most flourishing period came after the destruction of the national institutions, and the change of Israel from a nation to a church. The body of writings that took form in the schools of the sanctuaries and later in the schools of the scribes and was known technically as the Law, became later on the most revered of all the sacred books, and held in public regard a position far more impressive than even the greatest of the prophetic writings.

Of course, one must not forget that religious literature

is by no means the earliest to take form. Men were interested in much more commonplace matters before they began to write down laws and oracles. From the days of picture writing to the age of literature, people were concerned to write about a hundred different things which pertained to the simple life of the community, and had little to do with the subjects outside of the ordinary secular activities. Letters were exchanged, contracts were recorded, accounts were kept, public proclamations were made, the campaigns and achievements of kings were celebrated in laudatory chronicles, and inscriptions commemorated notable events.

In this growing mass of writing, the religious interest had its place, in the kind of products already mentioned, as well as the literature of omens, magical formulae, incantations, prescriptions for various emergencies, and other like documents. Most of these materials have long since perished. A few survivals and many references to such subjects make it clear, however, that among all the nations of antiquity possessed of a fair degree of culture, such written materials were to be found in great abundance. That they should have perished almost wholly is not surprising. It is rather cause for congratulation that so much has survived from ages in which the interest in the preservation of writing was so slight. And it is still further the good fortune of our time that archæological research is annually adding a considerable volume of unearthed materials to the literary treasures of the world.

When we turn to the Hebrew people, whose writings have proved of such value to the moral and religious life of humanity, we discover that out of a large quantity of writings of many sorts a few have come down to us in a unique collection which we call the Old Testament. The books found in this list give clear testimony that they are but a small part of all that was once extant. The books named in various parts of the Old Testament as once in existence but now lost would make a considerable volume. It is a sad misfortune that so many have perished. But this is the fate of much of the writing of the past, and we may feel a degree of confidence that in the providence of God, and by the working of the principle that the most valuable things tend to survive, we have in our possession the writings the world could least afford to lose.

SURVIVING HEBREW BOOKS

These Hebrew writings in the amalgum which we know as the Old Testament, appear to have taken form between the tenth and the first centuries before Christ. For the most part they were written in the Hebrew language, during the period when that was a current speech. There are a few fragments of Aramaic, a kindred but later dialect. But the books as a whole are Hebrew. This was doubtless the foremost reason for their inclusion in a special collection from which later writings, in the Greek of the subsequent period, were excluded. The simplest definition of the Old Testament is that it is the total sur-

viving literature of the Hebrew people during the centuries when their language was a living tongue.

Bible students have often supposed that there was something sacred and marvelous about the Hebrew language, because the Old Testament books were written in it. This is not the case. It was merely one of the many dialects into which the great family of Semitic languages was divided. It seems to have been the speech of the people inhabiting Canaan at the time the first Hebrew emigrants reached the Mediterranean coast from their Aramean and Babylonian fatherland. They took the language of their new neighbors in Canaan, in so far as it differed from their former Babylonian tongue, and this in time became known as the Hebrew language. Though this is by no means the most finished of the Semitic dialects, it is a wonderfully expressive language, and the sacred writings of the Hebrews owe much of their picturesque and expressive character to the dialect in which they were recorded.

LATER GREEK WRITINGS

There were later books of religion, such as Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon, closely related to this body of writings, and in many ways differing from it only in the fact that they were set down in the Greek tongue, which became the vehicle for literary work in Palestine in the second century B. C. These books have merited a much larger measure of attention from biblical students

than they have received. But because of the secondary position to which they were relegated on account of their form, they have usually taken their place merely as "apocrypha," and lost their rightful treatment at the hands of a large portion of both the Jewish and the Christian communities.

The New Testament is the collection of writings that gradually became classic among the numerous documents written in the early Christian society, between the years 50 and 150 A. D. They were of several sorts—epistles, memoirs, travel narratives, defenses of the new faith, and apocalyptic manifestoes. They were all grouped about the life and ministry of Jesus, and the work of his first interpreters. They are but a small part of the large body of literature produced by early Christianity. It was an age of remarkable literary activity, and the volume of writings that grew up around the person of the Lord was very great. A much larger proportion of these have survived than in the case of the older literature of the Hebrews. But much the same process of selection took place, and out of the total mass of Christian documents there gradually emerged the small list of books which are now included in the New Testament. Many others found their places in that extra-canonical collection generally known as the New Testament apocrypha.

In some such manner as this our Bible came into being. Its character and value prove that a book does not need a supernatural origin in order to be the vehicle

of the Spirit of God to the soul of man. This marvelous collection of documents, so simple in form and so human in the making, has taken a place occupied by no other in the regard of the race, and is increasing by wider and wider diameters the scope of its influence. These books are our most valued possession. Their sound goes out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

III

The Makers of the Bible

THE books of the Bible are windows through which one may look in upon the world's most unique religious history. To the experiences of the Hebrew people and the early Christian church all the generations have gone for moral and spiritual suggestion and direction, just as they have gone to the story of classic Greece for inspiration in art and education, and to the life of ancient Rome for ideals of law and government.

One cannot say that the national and group experiences recorded in the Bible are the only ones which disclose a deep interest in ethics and religion. God has not left himself without witness in any people. Several of the ancient civilizations reveal notable concern for the higher interests of life. But in comparison with the ideals progressively reached by the Hebrew and Christian communities, under the leadership and inspiration of the prophets and our Lord, they must be given a lower place. The Bible is the record of religious aspirations higher and more nearly realized than may be found elsewhere in the story of the race.

It is always interesting to recall the men who have helped to produce great literature. The books of the Bible furnish the material for absorbing study. The men behind

the books are of equal interest. To be sure they are not so easily studied, because many of them are wholly unknown except as they reveal themselves in their utterances. Yet it is impossible to read any important work without attempting to form some picture of the man who wrote it, and the circumstances in which it was produced.

FREEDOM OF BIBLICAL WRITERS

One of the first impressions one gets from the reading of the books of the Bible is that they were not written by people who conceived themselves to be making formal documents, or materials that were regarded as sacred when written. Rather they wrote with the freedom and enthusiasm of eager advocates of the truth, whose chief concern was to persuade others to see things as they did, and share with them the values of the life of good will. Only once, and that in perhaps the least intelligible book of the New Testament, does the writer assume the oracular air of one whose words are a finality.

Nor were these books, either of the Old Testament or the New, written with the thought that they were to find a place in a sacred collection of books, or to be preserved for the reverent study of future generations. They appear rather to have the character of tracts for the times, of urgent and impassioned protests against the sins of their age, and appeals in behalf of timely and needed virtues. Many of the writers did not believe the world was to last long. This was as true of prophets as of apostles. They

were not speaking to the future, but to the present. Theirs were voices, cries, complainings, against a present evil age.

For reasons like these it is always interesting to get as vivid an impression as possible of the men behind these books. It is a great thing to know something of Deuteronomy, the Psalms, the Book of Isaiah, the Epistle to the Galatians, and the Book of Acts. But it is still more interesting and important to have a just appreciation of the character and service of Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul and Luke. For in them the messages first had their expression —in their character, their thinking and their daily speech— before they were put into the form of books.

THE MEN BEHIND THE BOOKS

In order then to have some adequate conception of the manner in which the familiar phrases of the Bible had their origin, one must think of the men who framed them, and of the environment in which they were first uttered. Into that interval of time that lay behind the writing, in the personal give and take of daily life, one must penetrate if he would gain a true impression of the making of the Scripture.

There were the market places, the caravan groups, the busy crowds in city gates, where eager discussions were held, questions of moment were considered over the commonplaces of barter and exchange, and the trite proverbs so dear to the oriental soul were made a part of the traffic. There were the circles of the Wise, who sat in the gate or

deliberated in sheltered spaces of the streets over the problems of success and failure, the misfortunes of good men, or the folly of yielding to the seductions of wine and the strange woman.

There were occasions of great significance in the national life out of which came hymns of celebration, odes of gratitude for deliverance and victory, songs in honor of heroes, or laments over public tragedies, and dirges for the dead. In all the tribes and throughout the history there was the utterance of the devout spirit in hymns of the faith, prayers for direction, outpourings of thanksgiving, meditations upon the mystery and pathos of life, and pilgrim songs of the devout as they went up to the house of God. Such fragments of poetry are scattered through the narrative portions of the Old Testament, and are partly found in such anthologies as the Psalms and Lamentations.

THE GREAT LEADERS

Of still greater moment was the preaching of those men, the prophets, who did more than all others to give to Israel's career its unique ethical and religious curve. Moses is heard instructing his people in the wastes of Paran, or giving farewell exhortations beyond Jordan. Samuel counsels with pilgrims as they visit Ramah for his advice, or journeys about the land as a circuit preacher, spending a few days at each of such sanctuaries as Gilgal, Bethel, Carmel and Jericho, in the celebration of one of those "sacrificial feasts" that must have been a sort of combination

of a term of court and an evangelistic mission. Elijah, the fiery defender of the national worship of Jahveh, denounces the tolerant Ahab in the public highway, or routs the priests of Baal and Astarte in a fire test at Mt. Carmel Amos, a herdsman and fruit seller from Judah, uses the opportunity of his market journeys to Bethel and Samaria to warn the people of Israel of impending judgment upon the royal house of Jehu. Isaiah, the cultured and high-souled statesman of Jerusalem, wherever he can gain a hearing in the city, preaches the holiness of God and denounces the social evils of the time. And Micah, living among the oppressed tenants of the shephelah, makes eloquent protest against the merciless exactions of greedy landlords in the capital.

Some fragments of these and other public messages of the moral leaders of Israel have come down to us, either in quotations in the prophetic narratives, or in the books that contain small collections of prophetic sermons. We do not know just how they first came to be written down, whether by the speakers themselves or their disciples and helpers. We only know that they are among the most precious and inspiring portions of the Old Testament.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MESSAGES

In much the same manner, though with greater accuracy of report, we have come into possession of some parts of early Christian sermons. The discourse of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, the sermon of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia,

and other apostolic addresses, have been reported in at least their outlines. To this material must be added the inexpressibly precious words of Jesus, either assembled in small collections, as in the First Gospel, or more generally distributed through the narrative, as in the Third.

Nor must it be forgotten that all three of the Synoptic Gospels were the material of apostolic preaching virtually in their present order, some time before they were committed to any written form. It appears, then, that a considerable part of the Bible was originated in the delivery of moral and spiritual teachings, warnings and exhortations by prophets and apostles, and by our Lord. The literary impulse was later than the spoken word, and subordinate to it. Out of the crises of the religious life of those eventful centuries came the most impressive sections of the Bible.

Out of human experiences of the same urgent sort came the laws of Israel and the guiding instructions for the primitive church. Tradition affirmed that Moses gave to the nation in the wilderness the simple institutes needed for the age. Priests in their ministries at the various sanctuaries, elders of towns and villages administering justice, soldiers and kings making rules for their followers, groups of sheiks and wise men deliberating upon the welfare of their people, gradually added to this torah through the years. From time to time it was collated, revised and reorganized, as in the case of the Deuteronomic reformers, and the scribes of Ezra's age, and took form in successive

bodies of law, like the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Law, and the Priest Code, which seem to have taken their place in the national life in the early royal period, the reign of Josiah, and the Persian age respectively.

THE LAWS OF ISRAEL

So this great body of Hebrew legislation, which has served so admirable a purpose as the basis of later national constitutions, was not so much the output of one lawmaking mind as the expanding legislation of a people with the basic principles of whose religious and social life it was impressed through the centuries of its growth. As a torah for the habitual regulation of community life it deals with a multitude of details that may seem trivial to the men of today, and it cannot be doubted that it encouraged that elaboration of ritual and ceremonial precision which was the prevailing quality of later Judaism. But fundamentally the Hebrew laws enforced the religious truths for which the prophets stood, and the austere morality which lifted the tone of Israel's normal conduct far above that of contemporary peoples.

The intelligent study of the Bible demands the use of the creative imagination, which, upon the warrant of the facts we know, can look in through the windows of these books upon their makers, the men in whose lives the principles of Hebrew and Christian faith held sway. One must see the unknown author of the Book of Job, deeply con-

cerned to sustain the wavering confidence of his fellow Jews in days of national ruin, using the story of an ancient saint suffering incredible afflictions without apparent cause, as a means of present explanation in the effort to justify the ways of God to man.

One must go with Jeremiah into the vile dungeon into which he was thrust because of his unbending opposition to royal folly, or watch his fiery indignation when he learned that Jehoiakim had slashed to ribbons and burned to ashes the laboriously written roll from which he had hoped so much. One must follow Ezekiel about the streets of Tel-abib, and listen to his fierce denunciations of the sins that were making the fall of Jerusalem inevitable. With Peter one needs to travel down the hills to Joppa, or along the sandy shore to Caesarea, and hear his conversations with Simon the Tanner and Cornelius the Centurion.

And one must take ship with Paul, when he started, depressed and misunderstood, to return to his own province in Asia Minor, where he was to spend half a score of unrecorded years before his familiar ministry really began; or tarry with him in prison at Caesarea or Rome, while he chafed at the frustration of work he was never to complete. In such moments of companionship with the writers of Holy Scripture one obtains an insight into the meaning of their books which can be gotten in no other way. More than this, one comes to understand that the Bible was written in the spiritual experiences of these men long before it took form under their hands.

Something like this may have been in the thought of Jeremiah when he recalled in later days the hour in which he determined that he would cease his prophetic task which had proved so difficult and expensive. But when he tried to withdraw from his vocation as a preacher of righteousness, he found he could not do it. The word of God was like a fire shut up in his bones, and he could not keep silent. Behind every written oracle that came from prophetic hands there were volumes of the spoken word which never took written form. And behind all utterance of the lips there was the man himself, and this living message was the most important of all. No prophetic sermon heard in Palestine, no page from the book of Hosea or Habakkuk is as important as the prophet himself.

THE GREATER MESSAGE OF CHARACTER

It is conceivable that if no word of the Bible had ever been written, the power of those forceful personalities who first made known the truths of our faith, particularly the Master who wrote no word that has survived, might have been sufficient in the providence of God to found and direct the greatest religious movement in history. But no one who gives thought to the problem can fail to perceive how immeasurably the Scriptures have assisted in the enterprise. They are the living oracles they have shown themselves to be, however, by reason of the characters and experiences that lie behind them.

And how did they come to be written at all? And by

whom were they written? We may be assured that none of the books in the Bible was prepared by anyone who was conscious of having a part in the preparation of a sacred volume. We have traditions regarding the writing of some portions of the early laws. Samuel is said to have written out the rules for the king he helped to choose. Elijah was reported to have written a letter to a king of Judah, and Jeremiah wrote one to the exiles, which is preserved. The same prophet's book of messages probably originated in that roll, which, destroyed and renewed, contained the body of the sermons delivered by him up to that time. Hints of the circumstances in which certain portions of the biblical material was written are found in books like Ezekiel, the epistles of Paul, and the Book of Revelation.

WHO WROTE THE BOOKS?

Probably in many instances the documents were prepared by the men whom tradition has associated with them. In other instances the words of the prophet or preacher were set down by friends or disciples, as we know to be the fact in the cases of Isaiah and Jesus. In still other instances the messages of great moral leaders were doubtless gathered up orally and preserved in the schools of instruction, and there committed to writing as occasion required.

And the purposes for which the writing was undertaken are sufficiently obvious. The letters were sent as vehicles of advice and instruction. Some of the writing

was for the preservation of important oracles and their use in the schools. But no doubt in most instances the words of prophets and of Jesus were written out as the means of a wider dispersion of the truths it was deemed necessary to make known.

Much of the human interest that attaches to the Bible is due to the simplicity and naturalness of the book as a collection of brief tracts or pamphlets which took form in the most unpremeditated manner at various times during a thousand years of intensely vital history. These documents individually and as a collection have had much the same literary experience as other human writings. Only there is a certain romantic interest attaching to the Bible as a book with such an appealing and adventurous career and such a marvelous influence upon humanity.

A great deal of its impressiveness is due to these elements of naturalness and frankness. It is not a book making supernatural claims for itself, like the Koran or the Sibylline Oracles. It reveals the presence of the divine Spirit not by magical tokens, but by the reality of the religious experiences of the men whose story it tells. The moral and spiritual levels which it discloses and to which it summons all to whom its message may come are the proofs that it is inbreathed of God. The marks of its human makers are upon it. It is not perfect, either in its workmanship, its historical or scientific statements, or its moral ideals. It is not a level book. It

exhibits great variety of sentiment regarding ethics and religion. Yet this variety is the token of a constantly growing sensitiveness to spiritual ideals. And in the end of the day it presents as its final word the life and character of our Lord, between whom and our highest conception of God no acutest criticism has ever been able to detect the least cleavage.

The Bible has everything to gain and nothing to lose from a candid and insistent recognition of its human qualities and its human experiences as a collection of writings. No theory that robs it of these simple and appealing values under pretext of paying it reverence can be other than erroneous, and in the end, self-annihilating. Frankly received at its own valuation as the record of the world's most illuminating spiritual experiences, and especially as the disclosure of the life and program of Jesus, the Bible proves itself to be God's word to man, first revealed in flesh and blood, and then transmitted in divers forms and fragmentary ways in a book of inestimable value, a book in which the illumination and urgency of the Spirit of God forever abides.

IV

Varieties of Biblical Literature

ONE of the first impressions made upon a reader of the Bible is that of its wonderful richness and variety. In this, as in more important respects, it differs from all other sacred books. It is not like the Koran, a series of exhortations and directions on the common level of one man's thinking. It is not like the Rig Veda, limited to a collection of hymns of the faith, however noble and aspiring. It is not a compendium of moral instructions like the Confucian classics. It is not a perplexing labyrinth of commentation, midrash and fable, like the Talmud.

It includes the best of all these qualities, but in addition many others that give it value and charm. As might be expected in a collection of writings that embraces all the rich survivals of a great and purposeful people like the Hebrews, and the first eager outpourings of a new and mighty religion like the Christian, the Bible contains in the Old and New Testaments the most varied, opulent and inspiring literature ever created. When to these impressive features one adds the peculiar sense of the divine which impregnates these documents, nothing is lacking to make the Bible our most precious possession.

The Jewish people into whose hands the Hebrew

Scriptures came as an inheritance, made an effort to classify them. They devised a three-fold order of values. First, there was the Law, the five books of Moses. Then on a somewhat lower plane were the Prophets, including the Earlier Prophets, the books that recorded the prophetic accounts of past events, like Judges, Samuel and Kings; and the Later Prophets, the books that bore the names and contained the oracles of particular leaders, from Amos to the end of the prophetic period. These last named books they arranged in a rough approximation to their order of size, quite indifferent to their chronological sequence, and in that unfortunate condition we have them today.

JEWISH CLASSIFICATION

All the books that were left over from these two groups were gathered into a quite miscellaneous list, which for the lack of a better name they called the Writings. Here fell such varied materials as Chronicles, Job, Daniel, Ruth, Canticles, Esther, and the rest of the twelve volumes excluded from the first divisions. And because the Psalms were usually placed first in this miscellany, the entire group of the Writings usually passed by the name of the Psalms. Our Lord alluded to this three-fold classification of the Scriptures when he spoke to the disciples of the things "written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets and in the Psalms" concerning himself.

Later efforts have been made to give a satisfactory classification to the books, both of the Old and the New Testament. A favorite division of the former separates them into historical, legal, poetical and prophetic. But this is quite unsatisfactory, because prose and poetry are found in many parts of the Old Testament in the same books. Moreover the term historical is unsuitable for any book of the collection, for while there is much use of historical material, there is no writing whose purpose it is to set forth the history of the Hebrew nation.

DIVISIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A much more logical and satisfactory division of the Old Testament sets it into five sections: Prophetic, Priestly, Wisdom, Devotional and Elegiac, and Apocalyptic. Under such headings as these it is not difficult to make a fairly correct classification of that rich and varied literature which includes narratives of personal and national achievement, sermons, hymns, meditations, dramatic re-enactment of victories, legal institutes, proverbs, parables and fables, national and religious romances, mythological traditions, apocalyptic dreams, and prophetic hopes for the coming of the age of righteousness, holiness and peace in all the world.

Similarly in the New Testament there was formerly a tendency to classify it as History, including the Gospels and the Book of Acts; Epistle, including all

the letters; and Prophecy, meaning the Book of Revelation.

It would seem that a much more satisfactory division would result in five groups: The Gospels, divided into the Synoptic three, and the Fourth Gospel; Acts, which does not profess to be a history of the early church, but a record of a few events in the ministry of two of the apostles, especially Paul; the Epistles of Paul; other Epistles; and the Apocalypse, which is, indeed, a book of confident expectations for the early triumph of the church over the empire, but is hardly to be called prophecy in the biblical sense of the term.

In any attempt to set the books of either Old or New Testament into divisions, it must be kept in mind that no grouping that has yet been made covers all the phenomena of this marvelous literature. Each of the many books is a law unto itself as to the bounds it shall keep or the forms of writing it shall embrace. Writers pass from prose to poetry and back again with the freedom of Shakespeare. Legal enactments tend to find their context in a setting of historical narrative. Hymns of praise break out from the midst of tribal records. Genealogical tables interrupt the recitals of priests and evangelists. Visions of composite monsters or of dreamlike cities mingle with passionate exhortations to fidelity and courage. The books of the Bible elude precise classification by reason of their rich and varied messages. It is this which makes them the

despair and delight of the student, and the treasure of the church.

THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS

The first and most important section of the Old Testament is the Prophetic books. This name does not refer to any predictive functions on the part of their writers, but rather to the task of religious instruction. Prophets were not mere foretellers of future events. They were preachers of righteousness, interpreters of the will of God. The Jews of Jesus' day put these writings in two orders, the Earlier and the Later Prophets, as already noted. This is not an undesirable arrangement, though perhaps a better description would be Prophetic Narratives, and Prophetic Messages. The former would include the records made by prophets to interpret past events in the light of the religion of Jehovah. They did not attempt to recount the history, either as to individual effort or national experience. They only chose from the rich store of ancient memories and writings those incidents that seemed most convincing regarding the character of the God they worshipped and his will for his people. These accounts are found in their fullest form in the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. But the compilers of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, made use of them as well.

The Prophetic Messages correspond properly to

what the Jews called the Later Prophets. They are the utterances of particular moral leaders from the age of Jeroboam II to the Persian period. They include all the books from Isaiah to Malachi, with the exception of Lamentations and Daniel, which were placed by the editors of the Jewish canon in the third division, the Writings, or miscellany. These prophetic discourses are among the most precious portions of the Old Testament. They interpret the religion of Jehovah at its most exalted level. They are not all of the same value, but taken as a whole they are the most inspiring body of writings outside of the New Testament.

THE PRIESTLY WRITINGS

The Priestly books are also of two sorts, the Priestly Laws and the Priestly Narratives. The former include those collections of torah which took form through the centuries of Hebrew history from the days of Moses to those of Ezra and Nehemiah. These priestly institutes are found in the later portion of Exodus, in Leviticus, in Numbers, and in Deuteronomy. When carefully studied they fall into three considerable groups of laws: the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Torah, and the Priest Code. When put together by their final editors in the post-exilic time they made the impressive body of legal enactments known as the Law of Moses.

The Priestly Narratives cover very much the same

ground as those of the prophets, but in quite a different spirit. They recount the story of the past with emphasis upon its priestly and liturgical features. The books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah are of this class. Their chief concern is with the place of the ceremonial of religion in the national life. According to their interpretation of Israel's past, the kings and other leaders who gave due regard to the liturgical elements of the national faith were the ones who prospered. The same point of view is presented in those portions of Genesis and Joshua which come from the priestly writers, and the framework in which the laws of the middle books of the Hexateuch are set is from similar sources.

THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The third division of Old Testament literature is the Wisdom Books. It is, perhaps, too much to say that the Hebrews were interested in philosophy as a formal discipline. But many of their teachers thought over the problems of experience, and taught what they regarded as sound wisdom for their fellowmen. From such mentors, either as individuals or in groups, there came fragmentary utterances, collections of wise sayings, and books of philosophic and speculative character. There was a tradition that Solomon, the wise king of Israel in days gone by, had founded this school of wise men, and was the author of much profound observation regarding nature and human life. For this

reason some of the books of that sort were attributed to him. Such traditions are attached to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The Book of Job, which is the chief product of this type of thinking, and the noblest poem in literature, discusses the problem of unmerited suffering.

The Hebrews were a religious people. Prayer and song were the joy and consolation of many devout souls throughout the history. Out of such experiences came hymns, composed by all sorts of folk, as is the case today. These songs of praise and other utterances of the religious life were gathered into several small collections and later joined in a larger anthology of worship known as the Book of Psalms. Ancient report affirmed that David was a singer of such songs, and his name, as the most conspicuous in the field of devotion, was associated with the collection. This book of the prayers and praises of Israel was probably the hymn book of the second temple.

Another form of poetic composition was the dirge, a mournful hymn in commemoration of some national hero. David honored the names of Saul and Jonathan in the "Song of the Bow," that became familiar to the youth of Israel, and was included in the lost "Book of Jashar." A fragment of an elegy of Abner, murdered by Joab while on a friendly visit to David's court, is preserved. But the best known group of threnodies is the little Book of Lamentations, recalling the fate of

Jerusalem soon after its overthrow by the Babylonians. Popular tradition ascribed this series of poems to Jeremiah, but they appear to have been anonymous and diverse in their origin.

These two books, Psalms and Lamentations, may be grouped together as the fourth division, Devotional and Elegiac. They have in common merely their poetic form and their deeply religious character.

APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS

Apocalypse is a somewhat peculiar type of writing that became common in the later period of Old Testament history, prevailed extensively through the early days of Judaism and Christianity, and has continued to be a sporadic product of the Jewish spirit in later centuries. It was the utterance of days of persecution. It was the appeal from a hostile world order to a supernatural and instant deliverance. It despaired of the prophetic and apostolic voice as an effective instrument for the overthrow of evil, and put its trust in the avenging power of God manifested in catastrophe. It employed the cryptic language of vision and portent. It dealt with current political events under the forms of living creatures, often composite, after the manner of Babylonian art. The best illustrations of this form of writing are the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. The former came out of the tragic and heroic period of the Maccabees, and was designed to sustain

the hearts of the faithful in Judah with the promises of speedy deliverance from the Syrian persecutor. The second was a Christian defiance of the power of Rome in the latter part of the first century. Other apocalyptic materials are to be found in both Testaments, in such books as Ezekiel, Zechariah, Joel, 2 Peter and Jude. Contemporary Jewish and early Christian literature showed many examples of this sort of writing.

PERPLEXING QUESTIONS

From the foregoing statements it will be seen that most of the books of the Old Testament issued from the activity of the three teaching orders in Israel, the prophets, the priests and the sages. Other portions, like the Psalms, probably owe their origin to members of all these groups, and to others beside. In some cases classification is difficult. Is the Song of Songs a dramatic discussion of the problem of human love, or only a collection of wedding songs? Is the Book of Esther a priestly romance of the late Persian period, with its motive the explanation of the Feast of Purim, or is it merely a vindictive outpouring of Jewish hatred of the heathen? Is the Book of Ruth a charming idyl of the distant past, or is it, like the Book of Jonah, an earnest prophetic protest against the growing insularity and egotism of Jewish feeling in the third century B. C.?

These questions and many others that arise when the attempt is made to impose a precise and formal

classification upon the writings of the Old Testament, merely illustrate the freedom and spontaneity which characterize these books. One sort of utterance mingles with another in such manner as to elude severe analysis. The writers had no norms of composition to which they were obligated to conform. They spoke as they were moved by the Spirit of God. Their purpose was not the creation of a literature, but the utterance of their deep convictions. In the proclamation of these truths, whether in the form of sermon, hymn, discussion, parable, law, romance or glowing hope, they were obedient to the urgency that pushed them on, and made them eager to speak the things that were upon their hearts.

It is this quality of sincerity which makes the Hebrew Scriptures the most amazing and inspiring book of the pre-Christian age. Its writers spoke out of their own lives to the people of their time. They were no cloud-land dreamers, no unearthly voices. They were men of like passions with ourselves. Their messages were not of equal value, and they did not all agree. But the best of them perceived in some true sense the direction in which God was moving, and tried to get things out of his way. The result is this great collection of documents that has done so much to give the world a truer conception of the divine, and to assist in the fuller realization of the program of the holy life.

V

Growth of the New Testament

THE friends of Jesus were not interested in the writing of books. They were not writers, they were preachers. The Master himself was not a writer. He left no document from his own hand. The first disciples were too busy with the new joys and activities of the Christian society to give thought to the making of records.

At the beginning and for some time they were all Jews. The Master himself was a Jew, and all his earliest friends were of that race. Most of them lived in the vicinity of Jerusalem. It was only slowly that the news about the recently formed movement made its way into wider circles. For this reason most of the writers of the first Christian documents were Jews.

Even when the word was taken into Samaria, it was not quite regarded as a departure from the easily formed habit of thinking of the good tidings regarding Jesus as an essentially Jewish enterprise. The Samaritans were considered as a part of the ancient people of Jahveh, though on a distinctly lower plane of religious and social tolerance. Nor did the acceptance of the gospel by proselytes like the Ethiopian official invade the field of Jewish privilege, because in becoming an adherent of Judaism such a man had proclaimed his break with his former non-Jewish life.

None of this early activity which carried the movement into Judea, Samaria and Galilee, required written documents. There seems to have been no literary impulse in the church for years. There was no need for it. The believers were closely associated. The furthest of them could be reached in a few hours with instructions from their leaders. The story of Jesus, which was the substance of their preaching, was known to all. There was no need to write it down.

THE NEED OF WRITINGS

It was the extension of the gospel into non-Jewish communities which widened the field of early Christian operations, and gradually called for the use of writing. Particularly was it the ministry of the apostle Paul which awakened Christians to the importance and value of written communications.

To one who opens the New Testament without previous reflection upon the manner in which it took form, it seems surprising to be told that the Gospels, the books with which it begins, were by no means the earliest of its writings. Would it not seem natural that they should be? Yet a careful reading of the collection makes it apparent that such was not the case. Why should the books have been arranged on a plan which is so at variance with our modern way of putting things in something like chronological sequence?

The answer is that the order of the books was probably

no important consideration to the men who gathered them into a collection. They were not sensitive to the spirit of historical arrangement, which makes people desire to set documents in the sequence of their dates. Probably they were far more impressed by the relative value of the Gospels as the chief material of the collection, and so they were placed first.

It would be a valuable aid to the student if he could have a New Testament arranged on this plan of chronological succession. And now that the work of biblical criticism has so far advanced that the dates of practically all the books have been determined, one can use such admirable works as Moffatt's "Historical New Testament," Lindsay's "Chronological New Testament," Robertson's "Student's Chronological New Testament," or the common speech version known as the "Twentieth Century New Testament."

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Apparently the earliest writing in the New Testament is the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Twenty years had passed since the end of Jesus' ministry. The Christian society had extended its membership from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch to Asia Minor and Europe. The chief worker in this extension of the movement was Paul. After a considerable period of unrecorded preaching in his own home country, he had been called to Antioch, and from there had gone out with Barnabas and Mark on

a mission to Cyprus and the northern mainland. Later a second journey was made in company with Silas and others, in the course of which the apostle crossed to Macedonia, and visited the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens, going on presently to Corinth.

From that city he wrote this epistle, on the arrival of Timothy with good news regarding the Thessalonians. In it he expresses his joy at their constancy, cautions them to avoid immoral and indolent behavior, and tells them that they need not fear that their loved ones who have recently died have lost out in the event of the Lord's return, which was eagerly expected. Soon after Paul sent a second letter to the same church, telling its nervous and excitable members not to think of the day of the Lord as at hand, but to maintain calmness and a worthy deportment.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, which Paul founded on his first missionary tour. It was a powerful protest against the doctrines of Jewish teachers, who were attempting to persuade the Christians of those towns to add the familiar forms of Jewish legal observance, such as circumcision, to their program of Christian life. It is the most intense of all the apostle's writings.

Paul had already written one letter to the church at Corinth when our First Epistle to the Corinthians was sent by him from Ephesus. He had learned of factious and questionable conduct in the church, and had received a

letter from some of the members asking a number of questions. The Epistle rebukes their divisions, and gives instructions on many matters of importance such as marriage, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection.

Later on Paul heard that conditions at Corinth were worse than ever. His authority was defied, and evil conduct increased. He sent a third letter, probably to be identified with the last four chapters of Second Corinthians. The tone of this document is very severe. In deep anxiety as to its effect the apostle waited at Ephesus for a time, and at length journeyed to Troas, and on to Macedonia before he met Titus and learned that his letter had resulted in great improvement in the church. He thereupon wrote a fourth epistle, the first nine chapters of Second Corinthians, expressing his satisfaction at what he had heard, and exhorting them to faithfulness, and particularly to generous contributions to the poor members of the church in Jerusalem, for whose benefit he was gathering offerings from all the churches.

When Paul had finished his work in the familiar regions of Asia Minor and Greece, he planned to go further into that western world to which he had made his first approach at the time of his vision of the man of Macedonia. He would go to Rome, the capital of the world, and then on to Spain. He waited only to complete the offering for the Jerusalem church. In the meantime he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, telling them of his plans, and out-

lining his great thesis of justification by faith. To this Epistle there seems to have been attached at some later time a brief letter of Paul's to the church at Ephesus, recommending Phoebe of Cenchrea, and conveying his best wishes to many of the Ephesian brethren.

The journey of Paul to Jerusalem to carry up the offerings of his western churches resulted in his arrest, imprisonment for two years at Caesarea, and transportation as a prisoner to Rome. From his place of confinement in that city he sent four letters: To the good friends at Philippi, who had been so thoughtful of his comfort he wrote to express his gratitude. To Philemon, a friend at Colosse, whose slave had escaped and found refuge with the apostle, he wrote in affectionate terms, sending back the refugee, and commending him to the regard of his master as a Christian. To the church in Colosse he sent a message of admonition regarding certain questionable teachings to which they had given credence. And to the neighboring church at Laodicea he also sent an epistle by the hand of the same messenger. It is not unlikely that our Epistle to the Ephesians is this otherwise unknown document.

It seems difficult to realize that with these epistles the words of the great apostle close. No phase of early Christianity is more pathetic than the abrupt frustration of all Paul's plans for further evangelism. So far as it is possible to judge from the evidence presented by the New Testament, the writing and the life of Jesus' first and great-

est interpreter ceased with his Roman imprisonment. Probably, by this time, the sword of persecution had shed the blood of the Apostle Peter as well.

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

No one of the Gospels had as yet come into being. But there was a man, who, as a youth, had known the members of the Jerusalem church, where his mother lived, had been the companion of Paul on a part of his first missionary tour, and had acted as Peter's helper in later years, probably at Rome. This was John Mark, the son of Mary of Jerusalem. Sometime after Peter's death, and before the fall of Jerusalem, he seems to have written down the story of Jesus' life as his master, Peter, was accustomed to tell it. The Gospel of Mark is a brief, vivid narrative, emphasizing the power of the Lord in miracle and ministry. It was well adapted to convey to Roman readers a suitable impression of the character of the Master.

The fall of Jerusalem was an event of tremendous significance to the Jewish people. It appeared to put the seal of condemnation upon their conduct. A part of that conduct had been the rejection of Jesus. At first and partly in consequence of that rejection, he had seemed to fail. Now the nation itself had fallen, and Jesus' followers were multiplying everywhere. A writer of the period, convinced that Jesus had really brought to its consummation the experience of the nation, gathered the materials for another memoir. It is based on several sources: The work of

Mark, a collection of the teachings of Jesus attributed to the Apostle Matthew, and other materials. The book thus produced came to be known as the Gospel of Matthew. In it the person and message of our Lord as the fulfillment of Hebrew hopes for the kingdom of God are set forth. It is in an important sense the Gospel of the Jewish people.

So far as we know the entire group of New Testament writers was Jewish, with one exception. That was Luke, the friend of Paul. He was a Greek, and a physician. His acquaintance with the apostle brought him into contact with the leaders and scenes of early Christian history. The story of the greatest life ever lived was being told in many ways. Oral narratives and fragments of written memorabilia were floating about. For the benefit of a friend, Theophilus, Luke wrote with painstaking care a record of Jesus' acts and sayings. He brought to his work the broad sympathies of a cosmopolitan. His narrative is the Gospel of humanity, of brotherhood, of womanhood, childhood and Christian song. It is the Gospel for the Greek world of culture and humanitarian interest.

ACTS AND REVELATION

From the same writer there came also the Book of Acts, a brief account of some of the events which marked the growth of the Christian community from the close of Jesus' ministry to the end of Paul's career. As the friend of the great apostle, Luke had personal knowledge of much of the narrative; from Paul he could learn other portions;

and the remainder could easily be secured during his residence in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Antioch. This book supplies most of the information we have concerning the early days of the church in Jerusalem and the ministry of Peter, and puts an interpreting background behind the epistles of Paul.

The first generation of Christians, including Paul, counted much upon the protection of the Roman empire against their persecutors. It was therefore a bitter disappointment when that empire itself turned persecutor, in the days of Nero and later under Domitian. The martyrdoms of those periods thrust the iron deep into the souls of the saints. They were called upon to adore the image of the emperor, or suffer the horrors of the stake and the arena. This is the situation which is made evident in the Book of Revelation. Its author was a Christian teacher named John, probably of Ephesus. He had suffered banishment, and perhaps torture for the sake of the faith. To encourage his fellow-believers he wrote a series of letters to seven of the churches of that vicinity, and in the figurative language of Jewish apocalypse he added a vehement denunciation of the Roman empire and its head. The Christ who had gone about in mild friendliness and sympathy was soon to return as the Lord of the world, to take vengeance on his foes and establish his kingdom in the earth. This Christian apocalypse must have been of great value in maintaining the courage of the church in those hard times.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was probably written to the church at Rome by someone unknown to us, but familiar with the dangers that menaced that group. The brethren there had endured bitter persecution. Now there was danger that the lengthening time, the delay in the realization of the Lord's return, the appeal of the more spectacular Jewish services of religion, and the death of their leaders, would lead to apathy and even apostasy. The Epistle is a plea for loyalty to the gospel as in every way superior to the Jewish institution, and the means of direct access to God through the redemptive ministry of Jesus, the great High Priest.

OTHER EPISTLES

Another document closely connected with Rome is the First Epistle of Peter, written by a Christian leader in the capital to the disciples of Jesus in Asia Minor, encouraging them in the difficulties they were facing. It was probably sent out during the days of the Domitian persecution, and the writer's reference to Rome as "Babylon" reveals the sentiment of detestation for Roman tyranny which had permeated the church.

In the Epistle of James, there is given an example of the sort of Christian exhortations of which there must have been great numbers in the first two centuries. It is a work of practical counsel. It has been thought that the author was a brother of Jesus, but this tradition is based upon nothing in the writing itself.

In many respects the most impressive book in the New Testament is the Gospel of John. It is less an attempt to narrate the events in the life of Jesus than to interpret that life as a whole, and mediate the message of the gospel to a world which had little use for Jewish forms of speech, such as filled much of the earlier Christian writings. This Gospel probably took form early in the second century, and it may owe its origin to that John the Elder, of Ephesus, of whom tradition had much to say. The difficulties that confront the view that it was written by a personal follower of Jesus are apparent, though the expressions in the epilogue indicate that it was early regarded as the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is the Gospel of the incarnation. Professor Goodspeed, in his recently issued "Story of the New Testament," says: "Its great ideas of revelation, life, love, truth and freedom, its doctrine of the spirit as ever guiding the Christian consciousness into larger vision and achievement, and its insistence upon Jesus as the supreme revelation of God and the source of spiritual life, have given it unique and permanent religious worth."

THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The Epistles of John probably come from the same hand. The First Epistle was in all likelihood a circular letter sent to the churches of the Asian district, emphasizing the great ideas of the longer work, particularly the reality of Jesus' human life, and the necessity of conform-

ing to his commands. The two shorter epistles may have been personal messages to friends and comrades in the faith, to whom the more general writing was sent.

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus appear to be late directions regarding church organization and efficiency. It is not unlikely that they are based upon short and genuine epistles of Paul, some portions of whose word have survived in these admirable churchly counsels. But the Pauline note is almost wholly wanting.

LATER BOOKS

A still later fragment of early Christian writing is found in the Epistle of Jude. It was a stinging rebuke of scandalous thinking and conduct in the churches, and draws much of its symbolism from the lurid pages of Jewish apocalyptic, like the Book of Enoch. Some time afterward another writer made use of much of this document in probably the last book of the New Testament, the Second Epistle of Peter, another example of that large body of early Christian literature which grew up around the name of the apostle.

Already there was a rapidly growing body of writings issued in the names of apostolic men, and it was the task of later years to gather into a collection those books which were thought worthy of that honor, and to exclude all others. But in that recognized group or canon these twenty-seven books gradually secured their place and became the Christian Scriptures as we now have them.

VI

The Canon of the Old Testament

CHRISTIANS and other people who use the Bible in its present form are accustomed to refer to its two divisions as the Old Testament and the New Testament respectively. This form of speech is based upon the frequent biblical references to God's covenants with man, and is a familiar idea with the priestly writers of the Hebrew literature and some early Christian teachers, such as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

A covenant sometimes has the character of a testament or will. Perhaps it would have been easier for our generation to understand the names of these two portions of the Bible if they had been called the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. But the word testament was formerly in common use in that sense, and passed into current employment to designate the two collections. Of course the Jews, having little interest in the early Christian writings, do not refer to the Hebrew books as the Old Testament, but rather as the Scriptures.

But all of these terms imply that someone at some time made selection of the documents that comprise these two venerable collections. The result of this process we call the Canon. The word means a measuring line, and was first used by writers of the fourth century A. D. to

describe the recognized books of the two groups forming the Bible. There are no precedents for such a restricted body of sacred literature among any of the peoples with whom the Hebrews and early Christians came into relation. Neither the Babylonians nor the Egyptians had any such body of religious books distinct from works of a more general order. The Greeks and Romans had works of religious poetry and ritual, but nothing in the nature of a canonical collection. Perhaps the nearest approach to the biblical grouping is to be found in the case of the Vedic hymns, which from a period as far back as the days of Moses, or even earlier, were recognized by the Aryan Hindus as a collection of songs of the faith. Hebrews in exile in Persia may also have come to some knowledge of the Avestan writings. But in all essential features, the formation of the canon of the earlier and the later biblical books is unique.

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT VIEWS

Who was responsible for the beginnings of this procedure, and upon what principles was it conducted? The question is of interest, as it bears upon the sentiments of the Hebrew people and the first Christian communities at various periods in reference to their increasing literature.

Moreover, it is one of the questions upon which Protestantism has maintained outstanding opposition to the theories of the Church of Rome. The latter takes the ground that the canon of Scripture was determined by

the church in the decisions reached in the various councils, particularly the Council of Trent in 1546, confirming the verdicts of previous assemblies. These decisions asserted the canonicity of the sixty-six books of the Bible as we now have them, and placed the apocrypha of the Old Testament upon an almost equally valid basis of inspiration and authority.

The question was one of the moot points in the memorable disputation held by Luther with the Roman Catholic scholar, Dr. Eck, at Leipsig in 1519. In the course of the discussion the professor from Ingoldstadt quoted a text from the Second Book of Maccabees in support of his position. Luther at once challenged this procedure, on the ground that the passage was not Scripture. Eck maintained that the authority of the church supported its validity. Then it was that Luther uttered his notable declaration, "The church can give no more force or authority to a book than it (the book) has in itself. That cannot be made to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture."

LATE BEGINNINGS OF A CANON

On this ground Protestantism has taken its position. It maintains the claim that there must be in the biblical books a certain self-evidencing quality which makes its appeal to the discerning soul quite apart from any external authority such as the church can contribute by its sanction. No doubt it is of value to know that the Roman

Church has recognized the unique character of the documents which compose the Bible. But it is equally important to understand that the verdict of the church itself rested upon the practically unanimous conviction of the entire Christian fellowship, expressed in many forms through the centuries. The Roman Church merely ratified a judgment already reached by the Church of Christ throughout all the world.

It appears that any thought of a special collection of Hebrew books must have arisen quite late in the history of the nation. At such a time the total body of writings from which choice could be made must have been very considerable. This aggregate consisted of many different sorts of documents. There were state records, legal institutes, prophetic narratives like those of the Judean and Ephraimite sources, biographical sketches, collections of hymns and national poems, anthologies of epigrams and other wisdom materials, fragments of prophetic preaching, and masses of more popular and perishable literature, such as an active and successful people produce day by day.

But the first trace of a deliberate effort to place a particular writing upon the level of approved sanctity and reverence is observed in connection with the discovery of a book of laws, in the process of renovating the temple, in the reign of Josiah, 621 B. C. The code thus brought to light was made the basis of a drastic national reformation, and was adopted by the people in a sort of solemn

league and covenant as the law of the land. Already the Book of the Covenant, embodying the older legislation of Israel, had been in circulation for generations as the authoritative constitution of the state. But from this time on the new code, which both embraced and superseded the familiar legal corpus, held the place of power.

The law thus canonized by royal edict and popular approval is now recognized to have been our Deuteronomic legislation. It came into Israel's life in a dramatic manner and at an opportune moment. It possessed the sanction of the venerated name of Moses; it claimed the authority of God; and furthermore, it manifested those inherent qualities of high moral tone, lofty religious purpose, and searching appeal which have made it a most valuable portion of the Hebrew Scriptures.

THE CANON OF THE TORAH

A second stage in the selection of a body of writings as the norm of the nation's life is witnessed in the days of the two great reformers, Nehemiah and Ezra. The former probably arrived in Jerusalem as the volunteer governor of the unhappy province in 445 B. C. The latter came at the head of a little company of priests and Levites a few years later, probably in 397 B. C. The item of chief interest in connection both with Ezra's commission and his journey is that he brought from the richer and more highly organized centers of Jewish life in the east a copy of a document so important that it is frequently referred to as "the law of God."

This new code of law, revising and superseding the Deuteronomic legislation, appears to have grown out of the assiduous labors of priests and scribes in the Jewish schools of the east, whither the exile had driven their fathers. Since the days of Josiah the nation had fallen. Its hopes of restoration to political power, tried out in the melancholy efforts to revive Jerusalem, had all but failed. Its future success must lie in the effort to observe with rigorous minuteness the divine will as embodied in rules of conduct. Ezekiel had outlined such a state and the laws by which it ought to be controlled. A priest, the author of the central chapters of the Book of Leviticus, had produced the "Law of Holiness." On the basis of these materials the Priest Code took shape. And soon after, the Books of Moses, as they were called, reached their present form, including the prophetic laws and narratives of the Judean and Ephraimite sources, the Deuteronomic material, the "Holiness" institutes, and the Priest Code. This body of writings, fitted into the matrix of the priestly narratives, became the recognized "Book of the Law of Moses."

In an assembly like the one in Josiah's day, this volume was read, adopted as "a sure covenant," and solemnly sealed, with a curse upon the indifferent. In this impressive manner a part of the extant Hebrew literature become Holy Scripture. From that day forth this group of writings was the Torah, the Law of Moses, the will of God. Nothing ever compared with it in sanctity. Grad-

ually it rose from one level of veneration to another through the years, till it was confidently affirmed, first that Moses wrote the whole of it, and then that it was penned in heaven, and delivered to the immortal lawgiver through ranks of angels. It is possible to say with assurance, then, that this first section of the Old Testament to be recognized as Scripture, became canonical soon after the year 400 B. C.

THE CANON OF THE PROPHETS

At that date the second group of our Old Testament books, the Prophets, had not attained the rank of canonicity. We know this by two tokens. The first is the fact that the Samaritans, who at some period subsequent to the reformation of Ezra separated themselves forever from all relationship with the Jewish community, adopted the Five Books of Moses, almost in the precise form in which we have them, as their canon of sacred Scripture, but rejected all the other parts of the Old Testament. That Torah of Moses they keep to this day in a highly revered and very ancient scroll. The second fact is the exalted regard in which the Books of Chronicles, written about 300 B. C., hold the Law of Moses, while they employ with the utmost freedom, and alter without hesitation, the prophetic books.

But by the year 200 B. C. the eight Books of the Prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Roll of the Twelve (meaning the

twelve Minor Prophets, from Hosea to Malachi)—were accorded canonical recognition. The author of The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach lived about that time. He refers to the Law and the Prophets as acknowledged Scripture in his time. This provides a satisfactory assurance of the inclusion of this second group in the canon.

There still remained the miscellaneous books, more or less concerned with religion, but far less revered than those already mentioned. By the time the prophetic list was organized, no doubt a large portion of the abundant literature of previous generations had yielded to the vicissitudes of time, and disappeared. The nation had passed through such tragedies as might well dissipate all but the most highly prized and carefully preserved of its literary treasures. Certain it is that a large part of the total body of Israel's writings have perished. There were, however, at hand the great works of poetry like the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, each the result of patient gleaning and revision; the Five Rolls comprising Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther; and two other works, the pseudonymous apocalypse of Daniel, and the priestly record of national events, Chronicles, with its continuations in Ezra-Nehemiah.

Some of these books were quite late. In Jesus' reference to the sweep of events from the death of Abel to that of Zachariah he seems to imply the very late date of the Books of Chronicles in which the second of these incidents is recorded. Daniel was probably written about

164 B. C., and the Book of Psalms may have received its final editing as late as 150 B. C. It is not unlikely that the Maccabean struggle created the desire to preserve as much as possible of the national literature from destruction. There are evidences that not all of the books included in the canon were admitted without debate, for Esther, Canticles and Ecclesiastes were held doubtful by some. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, made for use in Egypt, was begun about two hundred and fifty years before Christ, but not completed till long afterward, and certain portions of the material were supplied from other sources. So that the Septuagint, or LXX, as it is usually called, is not a sure index of the time at which the canon of the Old Testament was completed.

THE CANON OF THE WRITINGS

In the year 132 B. C. the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach, whose work has been mentioned, made a translation of his ancestor's Hebrew writing, into Greek. In a prologue prepared for this edition he mentions three times over "the Law, the Prophets, and the Other Books." In this phrase there seems to be a reference to three groups of writings, although one cannot be sure that the last was a definitely fixed list. It is known that as late as the first century B. C. the schools of Shammai and Hillel, conservative and progressive respectively, debated the question as to whether the Book of Ecclesiastes "defiled the hands" (i. e., was canonical).

In the New Testament it is assumed that the three sections of the Old Testament canon were accepted and understood. The Master referred to the things written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (i. e., the Writings, whose first book was the Psalms) concerning himself. In much the same manner Philo, the Jewish historian, who lived in the first half of the first Christian century, referred in frequent quotations to the Old Testament as a work well known and of fixed content; and the same is true of Josephus, who wrote early in the second century. By the time of the Jewish Council of Jamnia in 113 A. D., the canon of the Hebrew writings had passed beyond debate. In general, then, it may be said that the canon of the Law was fixed in the days of Ezra; that of the Prophets by 200 B. C., and that of at least the major portion of the Writings as early as 132 B. C.

If it be asked what was the final criterion by which a book was judged, it may be responded with a fair degree of assurance that those books which were written in the Hebrew language were at last recognized as canonical. And if the work above referred to, the Wisdom of ben Sirach, seems to be an exception, it must be remembered that it only became current in its later Greek form, though in recent years portions of the Hebrew original have appeared. It is not easy to discover what other ground of decision there could have been that would admit books like Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs and exclude the Wisdom of Solomon and ben Sirach. But by the time the

final verdicts were reached, the Hebrew tongue was so far a thing of the past as to be classic, and for that reason sacred.

It seems reasonable therefore to accept the view that in the last issue the canon of the Old Testament was determined by the fact that certain works survived in the ancient language of the nation, and were therefore held to be sacred; and that the collection as we have it is the total surviving literature produced by the Hebrew people during the period when their speech was still current.

VII

The Canon of the New Testament

THE process of making a collection of early Christian writings which should serve the same purpose as the Hebrew canon for the Synagogue, was so gradual, and in a manner so unconscious, that no definite account of it can be given.

The Hebrew Scripture, which we now call the Old Testament, formed the acknowledged sacred writings of the first Christian communities. It is probable that these Scriptures even included the apocryphal books. Because of the fact that most of the first generation of the followers of Jesus were Jews, the older books of their race, generally used in the Greek version called the Septuagint, or LXX, were to them inspired and authoritative. They searched them for hints of the Messianic hope. The Book of Psalms was their hymn-book. They needed no other holy books in the beginning of the movement.

But when their own literature began to take form and multiply, it was inevitable that they should face the problem as to the kind of writings suitable for reading in the public worship. This was an entirely simple and practical question, and did not at first involve the broader inquiry as to the canonical value of such books.

Nonetheless, those writings which gained recognition in the churches as profitable for use in the worship held the priority as candidates for any subsequent inclusion in a reserved and canonized group.

Aside from the Old Testament, which was employed in the Septuagint translation, those churches which received letters from men of apostolic standing would be sure to employ them in worship. Epistles like those of Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Philippians would be held in great esteem by those congregations, and preserved for frequent use in the public service. In like manner those epistles, like the ones to the churches in Colosse and Laodicea, which Paul directed their recipients to exchange, would certainly be preserved in copies by both groups, and employed as of lectional value. Hardly less important were the circular letters, like Romans, 1 Peter and perhaps Ephesians. These also would find a place in the list of writings held sacred by those churches. But by the Christian communities at large the epistles did not come into general esteem until after the Gospels were recognized as in some sense authoritative.

EARLY LISTS

The first reference to a body of books used for reading in the public worship is found in the writings of Justin Martyr (died 165 A. D.), who speaks of the three Gospels (the Synoptic group) along with the Prophets

of the Old Testament as having this rank. Soon afterward Tatian, a disciple of Justin's, prepared a composite narrative of the life of Jesus for the use of the church at Edessa. This was woven together out of the four Gospels, and was called the Diatessaron, or narrative "according to the Four."

The list of books named by Marcion (about 140 A. D.) does not throw light on church usage, for he had a special purpose in directing attention to the teaching of Paul, which he thought was falling into neglect. His canon consisted of a modified Gospel of Luke, and ten epistles of Paul, the Pastorals being excluded. Here for the first time epistles take rank with the Gospel records.

The thirty years from Justin Martyr to Irenæus of Lyons (177-202 A. D.) witnessed a rapid but unrecorded growth of opinion regarding the right of most of our present New Testament books to a recognized place in a canon of Scripture. In the writings of the latter the Epistles take rank with the Gospels (though Hebrews is not mentioned), and the entire list is lifted from casual use by the churches to the plane of authoritative Scripture. Who was responsible for this development is unknown. Perhaps Irenæus himself. At any rate, the dangers to apostolic teaching from the inroad of heretical, particularly Gnostic, opinion, rendered it necessary to possess some standard of appeal in a body of books vested with apostolic character.

Passing over Marcion's partial and biased list, the earliest known canon of New Testament writings is found in the Muratorian Fragment. In 1740 an Italian scholar named Muratori found in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, in a monk's notebook dating from the seventh or eighth century, a mutilated extract of a list of New Testament books made at Rome before the close of the second century. The fragment starts in the middle of a sentence, referring to Peter's connection with the Second Gospel, and proceeds to name Luke as the third Gospel and John as the fourth. Presumably it dealt with all four of the evangelists as we have them. It speaks of Acts as the work of Luke. It mentions thirteen epistles of Paul, thus including the Pastorals, but excluding Hebrews. It recognizes Jude, two epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation. It includes also the Wisdom of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Peter, though with reserve in the case of the last named. This document thus includes most of our New Testament books; but it is noticeable that Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, James and one of the epistles of John are not named. The Shepherd of Hermas is referred to as profitable reading.

At the opening of the third century there is an anonymous writing which has been attributed by some to Victor of Rome (200-230 A. D.). Reference is made in it to the three divisions of Scripture: Prophetic writings—the prophets of the Old Testament, the

Apocalypse, and Hermas; the Gospels; and the Apostolic writings—Paul, 1 John and Hebrews. It will be noticed that this list omits Acts, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. Neither this nor the list in the Muratori Fragment can be regarded as a certain guide to church usage in that period, for their authors are unknown. But they are valuable as throwing light upon the growing process of selecting a list of authoritative books to which appeal could be made in the refutation of heresy.

THE EASTERN CHURCH

In the eastern church, Clement of Alexandria (165-220 A. D.) acknowledges the four Gospels and Acts, and fourteen epistles of Paul, thus including Hebrews. He also quotes from 1 and 2 John, 1 Peter, Jude and Revelation. He does not refer to James, 2 Peter or 3 John. But it is difficult to determine his views regarding the authentic list of sacred writings, for he also quotes in much the same manner from Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, the Preaching of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Sibylline Writings. According to Eusebius, he had a collection of New Testament books in two volumes which he called "The Gospel" and "The Epistle" respectively.

Somewhat more conclusive is the testimony of Origen (184-253 A. D.), the greatest of the Greek church fathers. He mentions as authoritative the books of the Old Tes-

tament as we have them, and portions of the apocrypha, particularly 1 Maccabees. He includes in the canon of the New Testament the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation. He does not directly mention James or Jude. He speaks of 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John as in dispute, and in more doubtful words refers to the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospels of Peter and James, the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, and Barnabas. But all his commentaries are upon books in our New Testament canon.

An important contribution to the settlement of the question of canonicity was made by Eusebius of Cæsarea (270-341 A. D.), the eminent church historian. He made three lists of books: First, those that were admitted by all, including the four Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Paul, reckoned to be fourteen in number, 1 Peter, 1 John and (with some hesitation) Revelation. Second, those books that were widely accepted, though held doubtful by some; these included James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John. Third, those regarded by him as spurious, including the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. At the order of the Emperor Constantine, Eusebius had fifty copies of the Scriptures prepared in elaborate form for the use of the churches of Constantinople. These copies naturally conformed to his rule of canonicity, and assisted in fixing it.

From this time onward the eastern church continued to hold much the same view. Athanasius (246-273 A. D.) gives a list of New Testament books which agrees with our own. So also does Epiphanius (315-403 A. D.). Cyril of Jerusalem (350-386 A. D.) differs from them only in omitting Revelation. A little later (395 A. D.) appeared a versified list of the books of the New Testament by Amphilochius of Iconium, in which are found all the books as we have them excepting the Revelation. Chrysostom, the famous Patriarch of Constantinople (died 405 A. D.) gives no formal list of the books, but in his voluminous writings makes no mention of Revelation, or 2 Peter, or either of the three epistles of John. In an appendix to the eighth book of the Apostolical Constitutions there is a document which may go back to the fourth century A. D., which places ben Sirach after the Old Testament, and follows it with the four Gospels, fourteen epistles of Paul (including Hebrews), the two epistles of Peter, the three of John, James, Jude, the two epistles of Clement, the eight books of the Apostolical Constitutions, and Acts. This, like some of the others, omits Revelation.

THE WESTERN CHURCH

In the western church at this period Augustine (354-430 A. D.) discussed the canon in a lengthy treatise, dividing the book into two lists, those which all received, and those regarding which there was some question.

In the case of the latter group he thought the usage of the churches, particularly the more important ones, should decide. His final verdict agrees with our own New Testament. Jerome (346-420 A. D.), whose Latin version, the Vulgate, did more to fix the canon than any other single influence, accepts the same list as his great contemporary, noting that there have been questions regarding James, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation. He remarks that 2 and 3 John have been attributed to a certain presbyter John, of Ephesus.

None of the early church councils seem to have given pronouncement on the subject of the canon, if a possible decision of the Council of Laodicea (about 360 A. D.) be excepted. This approves the Old Testament, Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah, and all the New Testament with the exception of Revelation. But this testimony is questionable. In the west, the Third Council of Carthage (397 A. D.) ordered that nothing be read as Scripture in the churches except the Canonical Scriptures, which are named as the Old Testament, the entire apocrypha, and the New Testament in its present form. It was probably but small effect which these consiliar decisions had upon the growing verdict of the church. It was rather the immense influence of Augustine, and the widespread use of Jerome's Vulgate which put an end to the discussion for centuries.

During all this time, if there had been question as to why these particular books were included in the received

canon, the reply would doubtless have been that tradition and usage accepted them as the work of the apostles, or at least of apostolic men. But the Revival of Learning, and the Reformation which followed it, turned attention to the subject afresh. The reformers appealed to an authoritative Scripture as over against the authoritative Church of Rome. But this appeal necessitated careful inquiry into the nature and validity of the Bible. Were these books which had been accepted for centuries as apostolic actually the writings of the first interpreters of Jesus?

THE REFORMATION VIEW

Erasmus doubted that the Epistle to the Hebrews was either by Paul or Luke; he did not think 2 Peter could have been the work of that apostle; and he disbelieved that Revelation was from the hand of the evangelist John. He did not question the worth of these books, nor their right to a place in the canon; he only denied their apostolic origin. But this was also to invalidate the familiar criterion of apostolic genesis. Luther was equally bold in his challenge of the traditional views of biblical authorship. In this he held ground similar to that taken by some of the Roman Catholic scholars of his day. Cardinal Cajetan, in the Augsburg disputation with Luther, questioned whether Hebrews was either Pauline or canonical, and doubted whether 2 and 3 John and Jude should be included.

The reformers insisted that the contents, not the authorship, of New Testament books must determine their canonicity. Luther's criterion was the conformity of a book to his great principle of justification by faith. He held, therefore, that the epistles of Paul—especially Romans, Galatians and Ephesians—1 Peter and the Fourth Gospel were the most important books of the collection. He placed Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation at the end of his translation, as having a somewhat different tone. He was very free in his discussion of the relative merits of the various books. But he included them all in his translation. Calvin had a different rule, regarding the testimony of the Holy Spirit within the books as the test of their canonicity. He passed over 2 and 3 John and the Revelation without notice, and expressed doubts regarding 2 Peter, James and Jude. Luther's friend Carlstadt arranged the Bible in three divisions. The Pentateuch and the four Gospels; the prophets of the Old Testament and the Epistles of the New, including thirteen of Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John; and the Writings, or Hagiographa, of the Old Testament and the seven disputed books of the New. Thus in spite of wide variety of opinion regarding the origin of the New Testament books, the reformers did not alter the canon.

The first official and general pronouncement made upon the question was the declaration of the Council of Trent (1546 A. D.), which uttered anathema upon any-

one refusing to accept as canonical all the books contained in the Vulgate version of the Scriptures. This fixed the apocrypha along with the Old Testament as an accepted part of the Roman Catholic Bible. In the New Testament, Romanists and Protestants hold the validity of the same books. The many versions of the Bible issued in various languages by the Protestant churches have made familiar their collection and arrangement of the various portions of Holy Scripture.

LATER OPINIONS

In recent years the problems relating to the canon have given way in large measure to the more important inquiries suggested by biblical criticism. This discipline has gone afresh into the matters of authorship and date with valuable results for biblical study. But the canon remains unaffected, for the reason that it rests today mainly upon tradition and usage. If the apostolic authorship once affirmed of practically all the books cannot longer be claimed, at least a certain apostolic atmosphere and feeling is discoverable in all. To this is to be added their place in the church through the years, which invests them with a veneration not to be questioned; and, above all, their inherent value, as aids to the interpretation of the early Christian ideal and character.

It must be borne in mind, however, that, valuable as the opinion of the early church may have been in regard

to the canonicity of certain books, and important as the confirmation of that verdict by the church through the centuries may be for belief and comfort today, yet it is the conviction of the individual mind at last which must determine what for itself shall be the limits of Holy Scripture. In reality our Bible, the Bible we know and reverence, consists of just those books we actually use, and which have proved their power to find and inspire us. It is useless for anyone to insist that his Bible has in it a list of books which the church, or the beliefs of his fathers, or any other validation, has approved. In the final issue the canon of any Christian is the group of books he uses as the Word of God. We are the makers of our own individual canons, just as the Christian world has always chosen deliberately and perhaps half unconsciously its Scripture.

And if that historic process of canon fixing were to begin all over again, and were to be submitted afresh to all classes of people, and if there were to be added to the material available for choice all the books written in all the lands since the Bible took form, the result would be the same. These sixty-six books would emerge once more from the process, a new, yet venerable aggregation of writings upon the high themes of God and religion. They have proved their worth through the ages. And to the end of time they are destined to go on proving themselves to be the divine word to men, the supreme literature of the race.

VIII

Translations and Revisions of the Bible

NINE days southeast of Suez by caravan, in a cleft of the mountains is the Greek monastery of St. Catherine. Tradition, rather late and not particularly convincing, located here the scenes of important incidents in the life of Moses, and on the neighboring mountain the place of the dispensation of the law. In the monastery there is a library containing many old and precious manuscripts. During the two or three hours daily in which light penetrates the obscure spaces of the library, those who have made the long journey, and have the proper official permission, may examine, and even, for a consideration, copy the documents here treasured, for neither lights nor fire are permitted.

Here, in 1844, Constantine Tischendorf of Leipsig discovered in a basket of refuse some leaves of a very old Greek manuscript of the Bible. He was not permitted to see the remainder of the material, and two subsequent visits were necessary before he was able to secure, by the authority of the Czar of Russia, the entire document, containing the complete New Testament, portions of the Old, and in addition the books of Barnabas and Hermas. In this same library two sisters from Cambridge, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, found in 1892 a

palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels. On three later visits these ladies photographed the entire manuscript, which is now published and available to scholarship.

In such places the various ancient versions of the Scriptures were preserved. Hundreds of such repositories have yielded up their secrets in modern times to afford students of the Bible the means of comparing and correcting the text of the two Testaments and the extra-canonical books. For wherever the religion of the Hebrews went, there copies of the Scriptures were in demand and had to be supplied either in the original language or in some translation. And wherever Christianity has gone in its world-encircling expansion, there versions of both New and Old Testaments have been sure to take form in due time.

NEED OF TRANSLATIONS

The Old Testament, as already noted, was written in the Hebrew tongue, all save a few chapters of Daniel, a portion of Ezra, and a single verse of Jeremiah. But the wars of Alexander carried the Greek speech out into the East, and made it the language of culture in all the Levant. There were many Jews living in Egypt in the third century before Christ. About 250 B. C. a Greek translation of the Old Testament was projected. Tradition affirmed that it was prepared at the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus by seventy-two translators. It was probably undertaken by the Jewish

community as the only means of access to the Scriptures. The work was accomplished by various people through a period of a hundred and fifty years. It was a free and not very accurate translation of the Old Testament books. But it was the form in which most Jews of Jesus' day knew their Scriptures, and the writers of the New Testament nearly always quoted from this version.

The official language of the Roman empire was Latin. It was almost inevitable that this speech should in time displace the Greek, as the Christian church developed its liturgies and literature. Accordingly, Latin versions of the Bible, including both Testaments, were in circulation as early as the first half of the third century. These are variously known as the Old Latin and the Itala versions. But the most important edition of the Scriptures in the language of Rome was the Vulgate, made by Jerome, an accomplished scholar and churchman, the later years of whose life were spent in Bethlehem. Here in fourteen years (390-404 A. D.) he brought out a complete translation of the Bible, including the apocrypha, which has remained ever since the accepted text of the Roman Catholic Church.

Many popular translations of the Scriptures into the various languages of the East were made in the early Christian centuries. There were many communities of Syrian Christians, and for them Syriac translations were made both of the Old and New Testaments.

The Jewish people, who had entirely lost the use of their classic tongue by the beginning of the Christian era, made for synagogue use versions of the Old Testament called Targums, which were sometimes fairly accurate renderings of the Hebrew text into the Aramaic of common speech, and sometimes free paraphrases which made no effort to be literal. For the Christian population of Egypt several Coptic versions of all or portions of the Bible were made in the fifth and sixth centuries. At the southern end of the Red Sea in Abyssinia, the Sheba of the Hebrew writers, there were likewise Christian influences at work early in the history of the church. There in the fifth century appeared a version of the Bible in the Ethiopic language. In the region which we now know as Serbia and Bulgaria, Ulfilas, the apostle of the gospel to the Goths, lived and wrought in the latter part of the fourth century. He translated the Scriptures into the Gothic language, the speech of the barbarians who had raided the districts of Cappadocia and carried off his parents a generation before. A contemporary naively says that he translated "all the books of the Scripture with the exception of the books of Kings, which he omitted because they are a mere narrative of military exploits, and the Gothic tribes were especially fond of war."

A Slavonic translation was made in the early centuries for the Slavic peoples, particularly the Bulgars. For the Armenian communities of Asia Minor a version

of the Bible seems to have been made in the fifth century. Among the Christians of Syria and Egypt who were overwhelmed by the Arab wave of conquest in the seventh century, there appeared translations of the Scriptures into Arabic. It will be noticed that in these instances the effort was made either to supply a Jewish or Christian community with the Scriptures for purposes of study and worship, or to provide the material for missionary extension of the Christian faith.

Similar activities have produced the hundreds of versions of the Scriptures now available for Christian education in all the lands to which the gospel has been carried. One of the most remarkable collections of books in the world is the library of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Hardly less interesting is that of the American Bible Society. There are gathered copies of all the attainable versions of the Scriptures since printing was invented, and many manuscript editions are shown. There are books of the curious and fascinating tongues to which only specialists have access. There are the copies of the Old and New Testament such as one sees on the shelves of the Bible dispensaries in Tokyo, Shanghai, Singapore, Rangoon, Bombay, Colombo, Cairo and Constantinople. There are the Bibles which have had romantic and fateful personal histories, as the possessions of soldiers, sailors, explorers and adventurers in various parts of the world, Bibles with bullet holes and sabre thrusts, Bibles stained with the

blood of missionary martyrs, and Bibles blotted with the red ochre of official censors. And besides, there are the quaint and curious Bibles in the early forms of our own speech; Bibles representing all the stages of our English Scripture; Bibles with grotesque errors, like the "Wicked Bible," the "Breeches Bible," and others whose printers were punished for their mistakes.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE

And that leads naturally to the story of the Bible in our own mother-tongue. This story is illustrative of what has been done, or must be done, in every language in which the Scriptures are presented. For language is a fluid thing. It does not remain fixed for a day. There is therefore constant need of retranslation and revision, lest the Word of God be left in archaic and outworn form. Fifty dictionaries of the English language have been issued since the King James Version of the Bible made its appearance in 1611. And if the ceaseless labor of Bible translation and revision has been the price of the measure of biblical knowledge we possess, not less essential has been the same process in all other lands where biblical studies are to be kept fresh and timely. And a similar future of splendid labor awaits the growing Christian communities in the mission fields, where the first partial or imperfect versions of the Scriptures are now appearing.

Two impressive names gather to themselves the

values of the story of the English Bible. Of all the work which preceded the art of printing, John Wyclif is the common denominator, and of that which has taken form since, William Tyndale is the representative.

In 597 A. D. the missionary Augustine landed in Kent, on the southern shore of England. His preaching was not the first Christian message that Britain had heard, for from the second century there had been confessors of the faith. From his day the growth was rapid. But culture was rare, and the need of copies of the Scripture was little felt. Caedmon of Whitby set some of the stories of the Bible into poetic paraphrase as early as 670 A. D. A little later, about 700 A. D., Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, prepared a version of the Psalms partly in prose and partly in verse. The best known Christian scholar of that age was Bede, a monk of Yarrow on the Tyne, who died in 735 A. D. The last book of his version of the Bible to be translated was the Fourth Gospel, and he finished it in the closing hours of his life.

King Alfred of England, justly called the Great (849-901 A. D.), did much to revive the Christian religion in the realm. He translated portions of the Scriptures into the vernacular, particularly the Psalms. He prefixed to the laws of the kingdom a version of the Ten Commandments and parts of Exodus. The earliest known appearance of the Gospels in English is a paraphrase by a priest named Aldred, who about 950 wrote

it between the lines of a Latin copy of the Gospels. Aelfric of Peterborough about 1000 A. D. made a copy of the Gospels, and later added several books of the Old Testament, as well as Judith and Maccabees from the apocrypha.

Soon afterward William the Conqueror came with his Normans to crush the Saxons. The Battle of Hastings in 1066 was the beginning of a total change in language, manners and customs. Little was done to promote Bible translation in the first centuries of Norman rule, but two or three versions of the Psalms in the new language served to make it familiar and acceptable.

John Wyclif.

Out of the stormy period which prevailed in England from the Conquest till the Reformation there rises the impressive figure of John Wyclif. He was an Oxford man, a scholar of distinction, and one of the "morning stars" of the new era of enlightenment and religious reform. They were restless times in which he lived. Political and social troubles made the reign of Richard II memorable. Wat Tyler's rebellion was a sign of the times. Famine and plague were frequent. Chaucer was singing the first songs of English poetry. Men were eager for a better order, but church and state were unawakened.

Wyclif saw that one of the greatest needs of the hour was a Bible that the people could use. He there-

fore planned a translation of the entire Latin Vulgate into the English tongue, which was now settling itself into a combination of the older Saxon and the Norman-French which had come in at the Conquest. This translation appeared about 1382, and was soon popularized by the traveling preachers whom Wyclif organized and sent out through the country. They were known as "Lollards," and performed a very great service in awakening the public mind on religious themes.

Soon afterward, as early as 1388, a revision of Wyclif's Bible appeared, probably the work of his friend and pupil, John Purvey. This became more popular than Wyclif's own work, and largely superseded it. On the foundation of biblical knowledge laid by these versions of the Scriptures the English Reformation was built. It must be kept in mind that as yet no printed copies of the Word of God had appeared. All the Bibles were in manuscript form, and therefore expensive. More than this, the practice of reading the Bible was under the ban of the state. Men were fined for possessing or distributing any part of the Scriptures, and even worse penalties were at times inflicted. This was the usual method of suppressing heresy.

TYNDALE'S WORK

About a hundred years after the death of Wyclif, whose bones were dug up and burned as a mark of royal condemnation of the reforms he had set going, William

Tyndale was born in 1484. In the meantime Gutenberg in 1455 had printed from movable type the first complete Latin Bible, and the study of Hebrew and Greek had made great advances under the influence of the Revival of Learning. The printing press, which began its work in Germany in 1454, was brought by Caxton into England in 1470. Tyndale studied both at Oxford and Cambridge, and was so deeply stirred by the intellectual and religious needs of the time that his rejoinder to a churchman of his day has become classic, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

Compelled to seek refuge in flight from England, he went to Germany, and with the help of friends, published two editions of the New Testament in 1525, which were smuggled into England, and met instant acceptance. Henry VIII used every effort to suppress this work, and many copies were publicly burned. But its popularity increased with the efforts made to suppress it. Tyndale himself, still in exile, in 1530 set about the completion of his work by the translation of the Old Testament, which, however, he did not live to complete. For in 1536, in spite of all the efforts of his friends to keep him safe in his retreat in Antwerp, he was betrayed into the hands of imperial officers, tried, condemned, strangled and burned.

The last words of Tyndale were, "Lord, open the

king of England's eyes." Miles Coverdale, the next in the illustrious list of translators, did much to realize the martyr's prayer. He published the first complete Bible in the English language about 1535. It was printed on the continent, but seems to have won the favor of the authorities, including the king, Thomas Cromwell and Bishop Cranmer. From this time onward Bible translation and publication became the order of the day. The work of Wyclif and Tyndale came to its fruition.

A friend and co-worker of Tyndale's, John Rogers, brought out the so-called "Matthew Bible" in 1537. This was really the continuation of the work of Tyndale and Coverdale, and yet it received the sanction of Henry VIII hardly more than a year after Tyndale's martyrdom. In 1539 Coverdale published a revision of his Bible, which because of its larger and more sumptuous form was called "The Great Bible." Several editions of this book were published, and it was scattered widely among the churches of England for the uses of public worship.

In the reign of Mary, the persecuting daughter of Henry, many of the reformers were compelled to take refuge on the continent. A company of these in Switzerland prepared a revision of the Scriptures which was known as the Geneva Bible, and became very popular. This was completed in 1560. In 1563 Archbishop Parker began with the

aid of other churchmen a revision of the Great Bible. This appeared under the title of the Bishop's Bible, and soon superseded the other work in the usage of the established church. About the same period, other workers than the Geneva exiles produced upon the continent the Douai and Rheims Bible, an English edition for Roman Catholics. This work appeared in 1609.

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

King James I, the successor of Queen Elizabeth, came to the throne in 1603. The multitude of editions of the Scriptures which had taken form since the days of Wyclif, differing as they did in many features and based upon many different sources, demanded the preparation of a standard English edition of the Scriptures. In 1611 a royal commission, representing the two Universities and the City of London, completed the work which has for the past three centuries been the "Authorized Version." It represented the best scholarship of the time. Its stately and beautiful literary style has made it an unfailing source of satisfaction to the English-speaking world. Though its reception into popular favor was slow, it won its way, and has remained until our own time the familiar and cherished version of the Bible.

But it is a far call from 1611 to our day. The changes which have come over our language have been revolutionary. Words do not now mean what they did in

King James' reign. More than this, much new material for the correction of the original text of the Bible has come to hand through the discovery of other texts and versions, and the light thrown upon the Bible by archæological science. Textual and literary criticism have made their contributions to the study of the Word of God. A new edition of the Book became imperative. The publication of numerous private versions added force to this demand.

In 1870 a beginning was made by the organization of two Commissions, one of English scholars, and one of Americans. The work was prosecuted with diligence until in 1881 the New Testament was published. On the morning of May 20 of that year, the entire New Testament, cabled from London, was printed in the New York Herald, and two days later it was printed entire in the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Times. Three years later the Revised Old Testament appeared, the work of these two Commissions.

In various points the judgment of the English revisors differed from that of the American group. It was therefore arranged that the separate readings of the latter should appear in an appendix, and that, after the expiration of the copyright period of fourteen years, an edition should be issued giving the American readings in the text itself. During the years that followed, the American Committee continued its labors, in preparation for the publication of the American edition.

But just before the expiration of the time limit set, the Oxford and Cambridge Presses published an American Revised Version, giving in the text the readings of the American Committee fourteen years before.

This action was regarded as most unwarranted by the American Committee, as it failed entirely to represent the status of biblical scholarship at the time of its appearance in 1899. Accordingly in 1901 the American Committee published the American Standard Bible, under the imprint of Thomas Nelson and Sons of New York. This is the latest, and by far the best, of the Revised Versions, which have in informed circles of Bible study largely displaced the archaic readings of the King James Version of 1611.

Many other versions have appeared in recent years, attempting to render the Bible more intelligible by means of modern forms of speech or such arrangements of the text as will serve to illustrate its literary features. Of the former sort, the Twentieth Century New Testament, now being expanded to include the Old Testament, is an admirable example. Of the latter, Dr. R. G. Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible" is a convenient and excellent illustration. But in the nature of the case, the Revised Version of the Bible is destined to hold the popular place. Like the Authorized Version, its general acceptance will be a matter of growth, but its superiority for general use is a commonplace of informed biblical study today.

IX

Textual Criticism

THE Hebrew of the Old Testament books was a speech closely related to the other Semitic languages, like the Babylonian, Phoenician and Arabic. It was written in an alphabet much more archaic than the square so-called Hebrew letters of our common Hebrew texts, which are in reality Aramaic, the sort which superseded the classic form some centuries B. C. Examples of the older writing, such as that in which most parts of the Old Testament were written, are to be found in the Moabite inscription of King Mesha of the period of 800 B. C., in the Siloam inscription of the reign of Hezekiah, and in Phoenician inscriptions.

No portion of the Old Testament has survived in original documents. The earliest specimens of biblical Hebrew are found in certain fragments whose date is not earlier than the tenth century A. D. From later times great numbers of such manuscripts of the Old Testament text are extant. They owe their preservation to the care with which they were handled in the synagogues of the Jewish people. But examination of their character shows that they all go back to a single edition of the text, prepared by Jewish scholars in the second Christian century, at which time the variant readings were eliminated and

imperfect manuscripts suppressed, after the manner followed by the editors of the Koran in later days.

The labor of unifying and preserving the Hebrew text was begun about 250 A. D. by Rabbi Aqiba and his disciples, and continued for many centuries in the various rabbinical schools. Elaborate rules were devised for the careful transmission of the text, and the exactitude with which this was accomplished is shown by the fact that the errors of that established codex have been perpetuated with the same zeal as its proper readings. This was done in the belief that the inexplicable forms, like abnormally small or large letters found in the text, were in some mystical manner significant of the divine will, and not to be disturbed.

THE MASSORAH

These scholars of the Jewish schools have received the names of Massoretes from the fact that the product of their labors was called the Massorah or tradition, the thing that was handed on. One of the devices used to perpetuate the interpretation as well as the form of the text upon which they came to agree was the invention of the vowel points for the Hebrew text. As written at first, and, in fact, more commonly through all the history of the language, Hebrew had only consonants. The vowels were supplied by the reader. But, as in our own language, this would naturally lead to great ambiguity. In English, for example, the consonants FR, unaccompanied by vowels,

might be pronounced far, fur, fear, free, afore, afire, and in several other ways, to the despair of the reader, unless the context made the meaning plain.

In most instances, fortunately, such is the case. But in a sufficient number, doubt is sure to remain. A Hebrew example is afforded by the fact that a word written with the consonants corresponding to WYSB might represent correct forms of at least three different verbs, and might be translated variously, "and he dwelt," "and he returned," "and he brought back," "and he took captive." To obviate such danger of confusion, the Massoretic scribes devised a system of points and other marks, to be used above, below and within the various consonant letters. This was, no doubt, of great advantage. But at best it only served to make permanent the interpretation which had met the approval of the Massoretes.

As matter of fact, very serious changes had been wrought in the Hebrew text between the days in which the various portions of the Old Testament took form and the time of the unification of its text in the second century, A. D. This is proved by the variations from that text shown in the LXX, in the Targums and in the New Testament. But perhaps the most convincing proof of errors in transcription is found in the differences between two sets of parallel narratives in the Old Testament itself, as in the comparison of Kings with Chronicles, of 2 Sam. 22 with Psalm 18, and many other instances. It is well-nigh impossible to copy a manuscript correctly. Errors of all

sorts are likely to creep in. Such errors are due to failure to understand the passage copied, or to a mistake of the eye in reading one word or letter for another, or to a misunderstanding of words when several copyists follow the voice of a reader, or failure of memory to carry properly several words in a series. These and other types of scribal mistake are abundantly illustrated by the ordinary Old Testament text.

THE WORK OF CRITICISM

It is, therefore, the task of one who undertakes the study of the text of the Old Testament to recognize the fact that the original writers used a form of Hebrew letters different from those now in use, that they did not employ vowel points, that their words were, in many instances, not separated one from another, and that the divisions of their material were not marked off in any way. From all this, it follows that the sort of criticism which yields the most satisfactory results is that which secures from the materials now at hand the meanings most in harmony with the current of biblical teaching throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. This would seem simple and obvious. But it does not take account of Jewish and even early Christian tradition, which at times obtrudes itself in the path of the plain meanings of the writings.

With the weight of this ancient tradition clearly felt, it is not strange that most of the translations should have been content to go back to the Massoretic text. This has

been true from the days of Jerome and the Vulgate. Through all the centuries since that time the immense volume of material slowly collected from the many versions has been given small attention until our own day. Even yet the spell of the Jewish tradition is strong. In most cases in which students attempt to study the Hebrew text of the Old Testament they content themselves with such editions of the Massoretic reading as those of Baer and Delitzsch, or Ginsburg. As might be expected, the Revised Version, which took form before the searching critical work of the last twenty years came to light, relies almost as much as the King James version upon the Massoretic text. The special labors of an army of independent scholars in the field of Old Testament textual criticism is now available. But as yet the work of each covers only a small portion of the material. Beginnings, however, have been made in the direction of a thoroughly revised text. Perhaps at the present moment, the student who wishes a complete Hebrew text of the Old Testament cannot do better than to use Kittel's, which follows the Massoretic readings in the text, but presents in convenient notes a large amount of suggestive material from the field of wider-going research into the versions, and the newly opened world of comparative philology and history.

The work of finding the most nearly perfect text of the Bible or of any other book is called textual criticism. A more common name for it is the Lower Criticism. This term is not employed to signify a lower grade of importance

attaching to this process than to some other, but to indicate the primary, fundamental character of these inquiries as contrasted with those of the historical and literary investigations which follow. These latter have to do with authorship, integrity, historicity and chronology. They are comprehended under the term Higher Criticism.

NECESSITY OF CRITICISM

Criticism means separation. It is the attempt to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious, the original and the superficial. All students of the Bible recognize the invaluable nature of the labors of such textual critics as have been named above, together with a considerable company beside. Upon the foundations they have laid and are laying, the structure of historical studies, Hebrew and Christian origins, and the theological disciplines is now taking form. There was a time when all types of biblical criticism were viewed with disquietude by the uninformed. Now the vital necessity of such researches as have been made both by the lower and the higher critics, and the value of their results both to scholarship and to faith, are the commonplaces of intelligent Bible study.

If the work of the textual critic has been of great value in the field of Old Testament study, even more romantic and not less significant has it been in the case of the Christian documents. And as these are the literary materials upon which rests the religious assurance of the

most progressive nations in the world, their importance as sources and the necessity of their complete investigation are at once apparent.

As in the case of the older Scriptures, there are no autograph copies of the New Testament extant. The most ancient copies we possess go back no further than the fourth century. It is probable that the books were mostly written and copied upon papyrus, a perishable material at best. It was not until Christianity became a recognized and powerful influence in the Roman empire in the fourth century that the multiplication and preservation of its books became a matter of widespread concern, and papyrus was superseded by vellum or parchment as the material on which its documents were reproduced.

THE GREAT MANUSCRIPTS

Of these manuscripts there were two sorts, an earlier and a later. From the fourth to the tenth century they were written in Greek capital letters, and were for that reason called uncials. From the tenth century a smaller and more running script was used. This is called minuscule or cursive. Of the uncials about one hundred and sixty are known, containing the entire New Testament, or parts of it. Of the cursives there are upwards of three thousand.

There are five of the great uncials that are most famous. Mention was made in the last chapter of the discovery by Tischendorf of a manuscript of the Greek Bible,

in the library of the monastery of St. Catherine at the traditional Mt. Sinai, in 1844. This was secured by him in 1859, and is now in the Imperial Library at Petrograd. It is known as Codex Sinaiticus, or Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It dates from the fourth century. Then there is in the British Museum a manuscript of most of the Greek Bible, given to Charles I in 1627 by the Patriarch of Constantinople. It is known as Codex Alexandrinus, or A. In the Vatican Library at Rome there is probably the oldest and most valuable manuscript of the Greek New Testament. It is of the fourth century, and is called Codex Vaticanus, or B. In the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris there is a manuscript of the Greek Bible dating from the fifth century. In the twelfth century a Syrian Christian named Ephraem washed or scraped the vellum in order to write some of his own compositions upon it. It is, therefore, a palimpsest, nearly illegible in portions. It is called Codex Ephraemi, or C. In the University Library at Cambridge there is a Greek and Latin codex of the Gospels and Acts, which was presented by Theodore Beza, who obtained it from the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons. It is believed to come from the sixth century, or perhaps even the fifth. It is named Codex Bezae, or D.

It is the task of the textual critic of the New Testament, in the effort to approach as near as possible to the authentic text of the Christian sources, to compare these and the scores and even hundreds of other manu-

scripts of the Greek New Testament, or of parts of it; to secure in addition all the information furnished by the many ancient versions, some of which were mentioned in the last chapter; and to compare with these the many quotations found in the early Christian fathers, which show what readings they found in the texts they used.

THE RECEIVED TEXT

The Greek text of the New Testament which was best known to scholars until recent times, is called the Textus Receptus, or Received Text. It is practically the same as that published by Stephens in 1550 and by the Elzevirs in 1624. These in turn were based upon the two earliest printed texts of the New Testament, that of Erasmus, published in 1516, and that of the Complutension Polyglot, printed in 1514, and issued in 1522. They were representative of the kind of Greek manuscripts accessible in the middle ages. Upon the Received Text the Authorized or King James Version of the New Testament was based. A very large proportion of the material with which the textual critic of the New Testament is concerned has become available during the past two centuries. Much of this evidence goes far back of anything Erasmus or his contemporaries had at hand. For example, the Vatican Codex, the oldest and best of the texts, has become fully known only within the last half century, and Tischendorf's great discovery was not published until 1862.

The list of men who have worked at the task of compiling the facts and applying them to the reconstruction of the text of the New Testament books is long. Among the notable names are Bengel (1734), Wetstein (1752), Semler (1767), Griesbach (1774), Lachman (1831), Tischendorf (1869), and Tregelles (1870). But the most eminent contributors to a satisfactory text have been the two English scholars, Bishop Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. Their joint labors upon the Greek text began as far back as 1853, but their finished product, accompanied by an explanatory introduction, came from the press in 1881, five days before the publication of the English Revised Version.

RULES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

In the long years during which the science of textual criticism has developed, many recognized rules for the prosecution of the task have taken form. These are now familiar to all scholars. Among them are the necessity of gathering all the facts, historical, geographical and linguistic, regarding a manuscript before its evidence is estimated; the danger of relying upon numbers, since twenty manuscripts might be copied from an inferior text, and be of less value than two whose ancestry is older and more satisfactory; a shorter reading is preferable to a longer one, because a text is more likely to be changed by additions than by omissions; a more difficult and obscure reading is to be preferred to one simple and easier, because

a copyist has a tendency to explain a seemingly difficult passage; and, a reading which indicates a controversial bias is less likely to be genuine than one to which no such suspicion adheres.

The application of these and numerous other criteria has given us our comparatively modern and authenticated text of the New Testament, although the Westcott and Hort material was not available for the English Revision. But even so, in many places the Revised Versions show the value of careful critical work, as compared with the Authorized Version. Among the changes in the reading which are most noticeable, are the following: The best texts omit Matt. 17:21, "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting," and the last verses of the Gospel of Mark, from 9 to 20 of Chapter 16; the account of the woman taken in sin, in John 7:53-8:11 is not found in the oldest MSS., and is probably spurious, though the incident itself may be true; in Acts 8:37 there is the record of a portion of the conversation between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in the words, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," which appears to be an addition to the original, and is omitted in the later texts; and in 1 John 5 the section which reads, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one," and which is verse 7 in the Authorized Version, is no part of

the original text, as biblical students now agree, and is omitted in the revised readings, the last portion of verse 6 being counted as verse 7.

One who is interested in the new readings which have resulted from the work of textual criticism has only to compare the Revised Versions with the Authorized, and more particularly, to observe the marginal readings in the former, which often suggest changes which the revisers were too timid to include in the text. These differences will be found to run into the hundreds, and many of them are of profound significance in their bearing upon the meaning of the Bible. In this manner by the slow but steady processes of trained and expert examination of every line of the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testaments, the world of biblical study is brought nearer to the original documents as they left the hands of their writers. These writings were not supernaturally produced in the beginning, and they have not been preserved to us in any miraculous manner. They bear the marks of human workmanship, both in their production and transmission. But with all the limitations under which they have come into our keeping, they vindicate their right to a unique and transcendent place in the regard of mankind, and they abundantly justify the long centuries of labor bestowed upon them.

It is probable that in spite of all that critical research may be able to accomplish in the future, some portions of the sacred text will always remain obscure. But these

imperfections are negligible in comparison with the wealth of inspired and inspiring material whose meaning is quite clear, and whose vindication has been achieved by the processes of criticism. To the men who have labored in these industries of scholarship, the church owes a debt which no mere mention of names can ever discharge, an obligation which only the accumulated gratitude of the centuries to come can reward.

X

The Higher Criticism

DURING the past century the books of the Bible have been subjected to searching examination as the result of what is known as the critical method. That activity arose as the result of the general scientific movement with its appeal to fact and its rejection of tradition. The discovery of glaring errors in historical or semi-historical documents relating both to political and religious history, sharpened the interest of inquirers to apply some method of discrimination to a wide range of ancient writings. The discovery by Valla of the false decretals and the spurious donations by which validation was apparently secured for ecclesiastical pretensions, stirred the scholarly world to further research. The nature and trustworthiness of many types of literature inherited from classic periods came under scrutiny.

It was inevitable that soon or late this process should be applied to the Old and New Testaments. The purely scientific concern for the correct tradition was intensified in the case of the Scriptures by religious considerations. It was to be expected that such activity would arouse apprehension on the part of those who had no reason to question the familiar theories of

biblical authorships, dates and values. The form in which the Bible was received by the church in the eighteenth century, and the views then held regarding its literary history, were considered authentic, authoritative and final. To only a few biblical scholars had there occurred such questions as are today the commonplaces of careful Bible study. Something of the work of the textual critic has been indicated in the last chapter. Upon that foundation it was necessary to set the task of literary and historical investigation. To some this seemed unnecessary and irreverent. But it becomes increasingly evident upon study and reflection that in the Bible the student is dealing with a human literature which has the common characteristics of all literary work.

NECESSITY FOR INQUIRY

It is clear, then, that inquiry into the structure and peculiarities of this literature is inevitable. Only timidity and submission to traditional opinions could inhibit from such a task. The merest reading of some books of Scripture shows that they are made up of two or three wholly unrelated parts which were probably at one time separate books; and others are seen to be compiled from various sources by editorial activity which has in turn become responsible for additions to the original material. The frank recognition of these facts is in no way disturbing to the faith of any believer

in the value of the Scriptures as the highest literary expression of the will of God. Since these qualities of combination and expansion are evident in other kinds of writing, why should they discredit a set of documents which have proved their ethical and religious value, not only in spite of, but, in some considerable degree, because of these very qualities of human workmanship?

The Old Testament came into the possession of the Christian church carrying certain assumptions and traditions regarding its origin and structure. Jewish opinion asserted that its books fell into three groups of distinctly different value and inspiration. There were the five books assigned to Moses; the authoritative standard of doctrine and conduct, and the object of far-reaching and luminous labors of commentation. There was the body of prophetic writings, highly valued, though not to a degree approaching the reverence in which the torah was held. The traditions regarding the authorship of such books as Samuel, Isaiah, Zechariah and the like were regarded as authentic and satisfactory. Then there was the collection of miscellaneous writings which included all the books left over from the two previous lists. Here again tradition was free to insist upon certain sacred names as those of recognized authors. The Davidic origin of the Psalms, the Solomonic authorship of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the exilic date and authenticity of Daniel, were not ques-

tioned, either in the later Jewish community or in the early Christian church. It was not painstaking inquiry on the part either of Jews or Christians that validated these documents; it was only the fact that no one ever suspected any occasion for question regarding these matters. If there still remained in scribal schools the echoes of recent controversies over Ecclesiastes and Canticles they were soon forgotten in the multiplying labors of Talmudic commentation and Christian evangelism.

FREEDOM OF THE REFORMERS

There was little effort to question these early opinions for centuries. It should be noted, however, that the obscure spaces of both Jewish and Christian history, lying between the first and fifteenth centuries, were not without fruitful work in the field of biblical scholarship, and now and then there were voices raising casual but not insistent questions regarding the ancient traditions. This process of inquiry was greatly stimulated at the period of the Reformation by the light into which the Bible was thrown as the Protestant source of authority over against the papal claims of the Roman Church. The reformers used the Bible with the utmost freedom, giving little heed either to Jewish or Christian notions regarding dates and authorships. One is astonished to see how radical were some of the views advanced by Luther and his contemporaries as com-

pared with the timid conservatism of the second generation of reformers, with their favorite doctrine of verbal inspiration. But still the modern discipline of the literary and historical criticism of the Bible was yet to be born. It could only come to birth as the child of the new spirit of scientific and historical inquiry that sought to test all the facts in these fields, and to hold fast only to that which could prove its worth.

The modern method of literary criticism of the Bible arose first out of the unrelated but similar inquiries of such investigators as Astruc, Colenso, Simon, Spinoza and others. The attention of these men was attracted to certain literary phenomena in Genesis and other portions of the Hexateuch. The variations noted in the use of the divine names in the early chapters of Genesis, the apparent presence of two different narratives of such events as the creation, the deluge and many incidents in the patriarchal stories, led to the gradual adoption of the documentary hypothesis, though not without ebbs and tides of opinion, and the rise and fall of other theories such as that of the "fragment" hypothesis. These workers, and those who followed them in this field, men like Ewald, Kuenen, DeWette, Stade, Vatke, Wellhausen, Hupfeld, Budde, and a distinguished company besides, attacked the various problems that arose when once the spirit of inquiry was fully released. They did not come to their task for the purpose of challenging and discrediting the

traditional views, nor, on the other hand, with the motive of their defense. Rather they came to seek the facts, knowing that whatever were the results obtained by a process carried on in that spirit, truth and religion would profit thereby. Already discredited in its very beginnings is the labor of any man who undertakes the work of criticism merely for the purpose of establishing a preconceived opinion, no matter whether it be conservative or radical. It is only in the atmosphere of free and unbiased research and with the conflict of opinions which is sure to follow any new proposal that the best values of Scripture and theology emerge.

FEAR OF CRITICISM

Thus criticism is both destructive and constructive. It signifies the removal of those things which can be shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. In all of its earlier stages it is sure to be destructive and alarming. It appears to be an audacious digging around the roots of the tree of life. In the Christian church it has brought dismay to multitudes of souls firm in the belief that their inherited and traditional views of the Bible were identical with the very nature of the divine revelation, and that any modification of such views was heretical and inexcusable. But that sentiment passes away as the discovery is made that the critical inquirers have no personal ends to serve, but are only searching for facts. And in the end

of the day it becomes clear that as the result of the critical process the Bible has gained immeasurably larger values, and is shown to rest not on heaps of sand, but on mountains of rock.

If it has been proved in the process of critical inquiry that the book of Joshua is a part of a six-fold unit called the Hexateuch, which has taken the place of the former five-fold Pentateuch; that Moses is only a common denominator for the legislation of Israel, rather than the lawgiver which later Hebrew tradition made him to be; that there are four documents in the Hexateuch almost as clearly differentiated as are the four Gospels of the New Testament; that the prophetic and priestly histories are compilations made up from various sources and with differing values; that the Psalms are Davidic only in the sense that the first king of Israel was believed to be a musician and a patron of the music of the sanctuary; that it is questionable whether we have any literary material which directly represents Solomon; that the Book of Isaiah is made up of at least three different bodies of prophetic material from different ages of the national experience, and manifests in addition the results of editorial work to a marked degree; that the Book of Daniel is in no sense a work of prophecy, and that it assumes, for purposes of apocalyptic persuasion, the name and character of Daniel; that the four Gospels are anonymous, and give clear evidences of the usual literary relationships;

that the common authorship of the fourth Gospel and Revelation cannot be maintained; that the Pauline authorship of Hebrews is no longer defensible, and the relation of the Apostle to the Pastoral Epistles is improbable; if, let it be repeated, it has become evident that these are among the conclusions to which painstaking and accurate scholarship has been led, the result is not the discrediting of these portions of the Bible, but rather a closer approach to their true origin and purpose. No part of the Bible gains in value merely by being assigned to some distinguished moral leader of the past; its value lies wholly in its own message and urgency.

It is the function, then, of the literary criticism of Scripture to raise inquiries regarding the integrity, authenticity, credibility and historical value of the documents which make up our collection of sacred writings. One wishes to know whether a book like Nehemiah or Matthew is a single document written by one author, or is an amalgamation of different works, a composite of various strata of writing. It is also natural that one should ask whether it seems probable that the name attached to a given book like Samuel or the Song of Songs or James is the name of the author, or the hero, or is a mere literary device. One makes inquiry, furthermore, whether the statements made in a biblical narrative can be trusted, as in the cases of the healing of Naaman, the Syrian, and the recession of the shadow

on the dial of Ahaz. These are not inquiries which are devised for the purpose of discrediting any document, biblical or otherwise. They are the inevitable questions which any thoughtful reader raises regarding the objects of his study. Criticism, therefore, is judgment, discrimination, investigation, and when properly pursued it has always the value of eliciting the kind of knowledge desired regarding the materials under examination.

BIBLE WRITERS AS HIGHER CRITICS

It must not be supposed that the process of literary criticism is wholly new and unprecedented. As a matter of fact, the Old Testament presents an amazing amount of critical work on the part of the men who were concerned, though unconsciously so, in its literary preparation. In the ninth century before Christ the schools of the prophets in the Judean sections of Palestine prepared and circulated a prophetic narrative of the early days of the world and of their own Hebrew people, setting forth certain conceptions of God and certain ideals of the moral life. A century later the prophetic group in the northern kingdom, apparently fully acquainted with the document which their earlier brethren of the south had published, issued another narrative covering much the same ground so far as period and incidents were concerned, but correcting the earlier views in a number of important details. They were dissatisfied with the anthropomorphic character of God in the Judean

record, and with certain types of morality which had there passed without criticism. They made free use of their undoubted right to revise and alter the previous interpretation of the ideals and institutes of their nation. They performed—these Ephraimite prophets—the high and impressive task of literary criticism. They had the advantage of the contemporary teaching of great spiritual leaders like Amos and Hosea, and just as these prophets did not hesitate to call in question the moral standards complacently accepted by previous teachers like Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, so these writers of the Ephraimite group laid emphasis upon the new ethical principles which awoke in their souls and emerged in their preaching.

In the next century there came the long days of darkness in Judah under the rule of Manasseh. Priests and prophets were almost entirely cut off from the privilege of public ministry. The times were evil. It was clear that the older religious customs and standards were insufficient. In the light of the hard experience of their time these consecrated men seem to have undertaken the task of restating the institutional forms of Israel's life. They had before them the prophetic documents of their earlier brethren, both of the Judean and the Ephraimite schools. They had in hand the laws of the Book of the Covenant. But manifestly these were insufficient, and to that extent they were wrong. With a diligence and zeal that win the highest admiration from

the student of that period of Hebrew history, they set themselves the task of criticism and revision, of expansion and elimination. The document which they produced and which later became the authoritative standard of the Josian reformation was a drastic criticism of the former ethics and religion of the nation. The most interesting feature of this Deuteronomic document is the fact that it claims and everywhere assumes the sanction of the Mosaic spirit, with the conviction that if the classic lawgiver were at hand these were precisely the strictures he would make upon current theory and practice, and these the new institutes he would issue for public guidance.

THE PRIESTS AS CRITICS

Nor did the process of criticism end here. The exile dispersed the most intelligent and resourceful Hebrews through the east. In the downfall of their government and institutions they saw the chastising hand of God. It was a natural inference that something was wrong with the previous religious life of their people, and that a more extensive and far-reaching scheme of religious activities was essential to their national revival. The years of the exile could not have been far advanced when this process began. It is seen some distance on its way in the ideal code of Ezekiel. It is still further developed in the "Holiness Law," though on somewhat different lines. It came to its

full expression in the great Priest Code which radically revised and corrected all hitherto accepted standards of religious practice. Here was criticism in its final legal form, so far as the codes of the Old Testament witness. Those workers of the fifth century B. C. not only revised and changed the laws of their nation, but they rewrote its history, evidently regarding the prophetic narratives of earlier times as entirely insufficient and misleading. And no one who compares the priestly narrative with its prophetic predecessors need be told how much more dignified and authoritative is its interpretation of the divine character, and how much more satisfactory its ethical standards than those of the Judean and Ephraimite writers.

And if one wishes to see this critical process in its final form he has but to study the work of those later editorial workers, who combined with skill and discretion these various strata of material into one continuous story, which everywhere emphasizes by admirable arrangement of details the supremacy of the priestly ideals of ethics and religion.

There are many evidences of the like spirit and activity in other sections of biblical literature. They may be seen in that anthology of devotion, the Book of Psalms, whose various editions and editorial revisions are plainly marked in our present Psalter. A similar work of criticism was performed by the Hebrew collectors and editors of such books as Isaiah, Jeremiah,

and Zechariah. One need seek no further for ample justification of literary criticism in the domain of biblical literature, even long before the scientific and historical motives had emerged to expression. And one is always interested in the air of freedom with which all these biblical workers exercised their function. Each generation regarded itself as the sole judge of what was wisest and most expedient in the handling of the sacred writings of the past. And each regarded this freedom as in no way inconsistent with that high sense of loyalty to the writings themselves which were in part taking form under their hands.

THE METHOD OF JESUS

It is not without value to note the attitude of Jesus toward the Scriptures and his superb freedom in their use. He was nourished upon those books which we call the Old Testament. He quoted from them as if they were the ever-present background of his thinking. Yet he used them as if they were plastic to his touch. He did not hesitate to show their limitations while he pointed out their value. He contrasted the laws of Israel with his own ideals, and maintained that the latter were permanent and complete. To be sure he did not discuss nor question the traditional dates and authorship of these documents. If he knew more of the facts than his contemporaries, he wisely applied the law of accommodation, or purposely declined to raise

questions which had no value for religion or conduct. But in all other regards his was the attitude of a reverent critic of the sacred Scriptures, and under his interpretation of those ancient documents men's hearts burned within them as they talked with him. The purposeful criticism of the Bible in all its parts may justly claim the example and authority of the Master himself.

It would be a most interesting study to pursue step by step the path of biblical inquiry during the past century in the company of those devout and scholarly men who have labored nobly to disengage the Bible from the cerements of traditional views. Against these men and their published results a volume of protest was raised by those who were disturbed in their comfortable biblical ideas. It was charged that these critics were disturbers of the peace, that they undermined the citadel of religion, that they spread the spirit of skepticism, and that they denied the divine character of the Bible and of Jesus. No doubt, all these charges could be sustained in individual cases. But time has greatly reduced the spirit of opposition to literary and historical criticism. Today the voices of antagonism are growing fainter, and are for the most part reduced to the circle of provincial theology and a futile section of the religious press. The process has vindicated itself by its results. The work of criticism has made human and convincing the story of the Old Testament. The prophets and apostles no longer look at us from the

dim, unworldly heights of the Sistine Chapel in Michael Angelo's portraits, but from the nearer and more sympathetic levels of Sargent and Tissot.

THE VALUE OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM

The work of the Higher Criticism is not completed as yet, though the main lines of its affirmations have been established. It is rather in some of the details that work still remains to be done. Along the broad frontiers of biblical literature its results are accepted, and the great Christian public is well on its way toward complete conviction of its outstanding results and a calm and assured employment of its findings. It is difficult any longer to stir up controversy over the process. The odium once attached to those concerned with it has largely receded. On the foundations laid by the work of devout scholars in this field are building the impressive structures of a rational theology and religious education. The age of apprehension is passing. Our children will not have to fight the battle for freedom through which the present generation has been passing. The critical spirit that has given reasonable and convincing explanation of the physical universe has provided us with an equally satisfactory interpretation of the Word of God.

The Higher Criticism has forever disposed of the fetish of a level Bible; it has destroyed the doctrine of verbal inspiration; it has set in proper light the par-

tial and primitive ethics of the Hebrew people; it has relieved the church of the responsibility of defending ancient social abuses which received popular and even prophetic sanction in Old Testament times; it has made faith easier and more confident; it has helped the world to turn from the imperfect views of an adolescent stage of the race to the satisfying ideals of our Lord; it has enabled us to understand the varying testimonies to the life of Jesus and the different tendencies of the apostolic age; and most of all, it has explained the seeming contradictions and conflicts of biblical statement which were in former periods the target of captious and often successful attack.

The work of the Higher Criticism has its purposes and its limitations. It is a means to the better understanding of the Word of God. If it can make more vivid and convincing the pages of the Old Testament and the New it performs an admirable and gratifying service. Whatever helps to the intelligent appreciation of the Bible is of undoubted value, for, as Mr. Gladstone has said, "All the wonders of Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than this book, the history of the human soul in relation to its Maker."

XI

The Bible and the Monuments

"ON MARCH 13 we received a telegram saying that our friends were on the way up the Tigris, but as the boat was not allowed to stop at Kut-el-Amara they would be obliged to continue to Bagdad. Since my last report the excavations have been carried on but four days, on account of severe sand storms, religious feasts, trouble with an Arab sheik, and my absence in Kut-el-Amara." This is not a military report, familiar as are the two places mentioned as scenes of recent stirring events in the Mesopotamian campaign of the great world war. It is an excerpt from the letter of an excavator who was working some years ago on one of the most ancient sites in Babylonia, a few miles from the former location of Babylon.

The writer of that report was one of the men who have devoted their efforts to the discovery of ancient remains in the lands where biblical history transpired. The science of archæology is one of the later outgrowths of the spirit of investigation. Its object is the discovery, description and classification of whatever materials throw light on ancient civilizations. The excavators have dug in many parts of Greece, in different sections of the city of Rome, in Asia Minor. in Phœnicia, on the island of

Crete, and in Cyprus. But most interesting of all to the biblical student have been the discoveries made in Palestine, in Egypt, and in Assyria and Babylonia.

Until recent years the Bible stood comparatively alone in the midst of the world's literature. It told the story of earlier civilizations around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. There was a sort of traditional history of these civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, but historical and archæological science had not yet confirmed the biblical statements regarding them. How can one be sure that the biblical statements are true? Were there such places as those referred to in the Old and New Testaments? Did cities like Ur, Haran, Pithom, Gezer, Megiddo and Gath actually exist? Were there such kings as Rameses, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Sargon and Sennacherib?

KEY TO BABYLONIAN LANGUAGE

Today the student of the Bible and its contemporary history has at hand a mass of confirmatory details yielded up by the mounds and ruins of the oriental world. Cities long buried have given up their secrets. Rulers believed to be half mythical have emerged into the light of verifiable knowledge, and incidents told in the Bible are now vouched for by the narratives of the Tigris and the Nile. The results achieved by archæology are the more impressive when it is remembered that until within recent years the early stories of Egypt and the Assyrian peninsula

were locked in the mysterious grasp of unknown languages. Nothing more romantic has been accomplished by the scientific researches of scholars than the opening of the secret doors that admitted the modern age to a knowledge of the literatures of those two great civilizations.

For a long time it was known that old Persian inscriptions were to be seen upon the ruined walls of Persepolis. As long ago as Niebuhr's day the three-fold character of these inscriptions was perceived. But not until Grotofend in 1802 hit upon the secret that these were actually three languages, the old Persian, the Median or Susian, and the Babylonian, was the significance of the inscriptions perceived as a key to the cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, language of Babylonia, as yet undeciphered. The next and most decisive step was taken in 1835 by Henry C. Rawlinson, an English officer with the Persian army in the Zagros mountains. He discovered a great inscription cut on the side of the Behistun Rock in western Persia, near the old Median highway betweeen Hamadan and Kirmanshah. The former of these towns is the ancient Ecbatana, and both have figured in recent reports on the advance of the Russians toward the Tigris.

This mass of mountain rock towers seventeen hundred feet above the plain. On a smooth surface more than three hundred feet above the base, Darius placed his own image in heroic size in bas relief, and before him

nine captive kings, while prostrate at his feet was placed the Magian usurper, Guamata. Below and beside the sculptured group there are carved in three languages, line after line of wedge-shaped, or nail-shaped, characters arranged in columns telling the prowess and achievements of the great king. Rawlinson copied and translated five columns, including some four hundred lines. Later, these were sent to Europe and published in 1847. The trilingual inscriptions at Persepolis gave the key, and Rawlinson using it opened to the world the treasures of Babylonian and Assyrian literature.

From that time onward the science of Assyriology made rapid progress through the excavations and decipherments of Botta, Place, Layard, Rassam, DeSarsac, George Smith, Ward, Peters and many others. The great sites of Kouyunjik and Khorsabad, parts of the location of ancient Nineveh, the excavations at Warka, Senkere, Nuffur, Mugayyer, Birs, Tello, Bismya and numerous other places have given to the world an increasingly adequate picture of the most ancient of Semitic civilizations.

Among the objects found in these regions and now available in the museums of the world for the study of biblical archæology a few only can be mentioned. Near the site of Nineveh, Rassam found an obelisk of black marble set up by Shalmaneser II. On one of its panels there is a scene representing Hebrews offering presents to the Assyrian king. The inscription reads, "The tribute of Jehu the son of Omri, silver, gold, basins of gold,

bowls of gold, lead, a royal sceptre, staves, I received." In the inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser III record is made of the capture of Hamath and Arpad in 738 B. C., of the appeal made by Ahaz of Judah against the allied kings of the north in 734 B. C. and the fall of Damascus in 732 B. C.

SENNACHERIB'S INSCRIPTION

The inscriptions of Shalmaneser IV tell of the siege of Samaria in 722 B. C., and those of Sargon II recount its fall in the following year. A remarkably interesting inscription is that of Sennacherib telling of his expedition against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B. C. The following narrative by the king's own scribes may be compared with the biblical story contained in 2 Kings 18, 19. After recounting the earlier events of his third campaign to the Mediterranean coast, with his victories in Phœnicia and Philistia, Sennacherib proceeds: "But Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his fenced cities and fortresses, and small towns in their vicinity without number, by breaking them down with battering rams and the blows of (illegible), and the strokes of axes and hammers, I besieged and took: 200,150 persons, small and great, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, large cattle, small cattle, without number, I brought forth from the midst of them and counted as spoil. As for Hezekiah himself, like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut him up. I threw up forts

against him, and whoever would come out of the gate of the city I turned back. His cities which I had spoiled I cut off from his land, and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, Zil-bel, king of Gaza, and so made his territory small. To the former tribute, the gift of their country, the presents due to my sovereignty, I made an addition and imposed it upon (them). As for Hezekiah himself, the fear of the glory of my sovereignty overwhelmed him, and the Arabs and his other allies, whom he had brought to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, were seized with great fear. Thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, * * * great stores of lapis-lazuli, couches of ivory, arm-chairs of ivory (covered) with elephants' hide, ivory tusks, ussu wood, ukarinu wood, and the like, an immense treasure; and his daughters, his palace-women, men-singers, women-singers, to Nineveh my royal city I made him bring; and for the delivery of the tribute and rendering homage he sent his ambassador."

EGYPTIAN INSCRIPTIONS

The most fruitful region with which the biblical student is concerned is Egypt, for here the kindly sand and the warm climate have combined to preserve enormous quantities of pictorial and inscriptional material, which in other regions would have perished. The hieroglyphics or priestly writings, the monumental records made by the sovereigns of Egypt, are more or less famil-

iar. But their secret had to be secured by precisely the same means as those employed in the case of the cuneiform text. One of the prized possessions of the British Museum is the celebrated Rosetta Stone, a large block of black granite, with three inscriptions, one in hieroglyphic, one in the shorter or demotic writing, and one in Greek. This stone was discovered near the town of Rosetta east of Alexandria by a French artillery officer at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1799. Several attempts were made to decipher the inscription, but the work was not accomplished with satisfaction until 1822, when Francois Champollion began his work which lasted for ten years and resulted in the publication of an Egyptian grammar and vocabulary.

The Greek inscription on the Rosetta Stone was identical with the other two in substance and revealed their secret. It was a decree in honor of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-181 B. C.). From this time it was simply a question of securing ampler material and extending the field of Egyptology. Among the famous names in the history of this science have been Lepsius, Marriette, Maspero, DeMorgan, Naville and Petrie. The light which the labors of Egyptologists have thrown upon biblical literature may be illustrated by two or three examples. On the south wall of the temple of Amon at Karnak, a portion of the ancient Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, there is a large inscription of Sheshonk I of the twenty-second dynasty (the Shishak of the narrative of 1 Kings

14: 25-28). The gigantic figure of the god towers above that of the king himself, who boasts that on an expedition to the northeast he had taken many cities in Palestine, the names of several of which are quite familiar, including Gaza, Abel, Bethaneth, Beth Horon, Aijalon, Gibeon and Shunem. This was the invasion which spoiled Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam, and pushed on with its ravages into the northern kingdom.

There is but one reference to Israel on the Egyptian monuments. This is found in an inscription of Merneptah of the nineteenth dynasty, the successor of Rameses the Great. It was discovered by Petrie in the ruins of that king's mortuary temple at Thebes in 1896. The inscription is a hymn on the victory over the Lybians, and its concluding strophe reads: "The kings are overthrown, saying 'Salaam.' No one holds up his head among the nine bows. Wasted is Teheme, Kheta is pacified, plundered is Canaan, carried off is Askelon, seized upon is Gezer, Yenoam is made as nothing, Israel is desolated; his seed is not. Palestine has become a widow (i. e., unprotected) for Egypt."

Two other important finds have come from the soil of Egypt. One is the celebrated collection of the Tel-el-Amarna letters. These were reports made in the cuneiform language by governors and other officials in Palestine to Amenophis IV of the eighteenth dynasty, about 1400 B. C. These show that Babylonian was the official language of Palestine at that period. The second of these

bodies of material was found at Oxyrhynchus, not far from the Nile, by Grenfell and Hunt, and comprised a considerable collection of the logia of Jesus written on papyrus. They probably represent literary activities of the second Christian century.

PALESTINE DISCOVERIES

But naturally the keenest interest attaches to archæological work in Palestine and Syria. It was the land of the Lord. Biblical history, both in the Old and New Testaments, was concerned directly with it. To Palestine the pilgrims went in vast numbers in the early centuries. And the number of those who have journeyed there for purely biblical reasons in days since then has been a great host. Yet it has thus far yielded fewer returns for the labor of the excavator than either Babylonia or Egypt. The reasons for this are many. It is a much smaller country. It has been desolated again and again by war, earthquake and other disturbances. Its soil is shallower, and its mountains are washed down by the heavy rains of the winter. Objects of interest from ancient days have little chance of survival in such conditions. At the same time the beginnings of work in Syria have yielded some interesting results, and some have come to hand by pure accident. For example, in 1868 a missionary living in Dibon, in ancient Moab, came upon an archaic inscription on a stone built into the wall of a native house. When finally secured in rather mutilated form, this proved

to be a record of King Mesha, of Moab, a contemporary of Ahab. The stone is now called the Moabite Stone, and is preserved in the Louvre, in Paris. It is in praise of Chemosh, the god of Moab, and dates from about 850 B. C. Its contents form a remarkably interesting commentary upon the biblical record in 2 Kings 3:4-27, the story of the war with Moab.

The Bible mentions as one of the acts of King Hezekiah the construction of a rock conduit, or tunnel, under the city of Jerusalem. This was long ago discovered as one of the interesting rock cuttings under the city. It extends in an irregular course from the Virgin's Fountain, the ancient Gihon, southward to the Pool of Siloam, something like a third of a mile. It was dug by workmen who worked in two parties from either end of the cutting, and after much difficulty met half way the course. A few years ago Dr. Schick, a German teacher who lived for many years in Jerusalem and was a careful investigator of all its archæological features, discovered in the opening of this tunnel near the Siloam end an inscription in archaic Hebrew characters, like those of the Moabite Stone. This interesting object has now been removed to the imperial museum at Constantinople. It tells the story of the meeting of the two groups of workmen after they had made many unsuccessful efforts to find each other through the rock. It is called the Siloam Inscription, and is the most important archæological object yet found in Palestine.

On the site of the ancient temple, now called the harem area, M. Clarmont-Ganneau found, a few years ago, a stone with a Greek inscription warning all non-Jews against approach beyond a given point in the temple court, on pain of death. This is known as "the Warning Stone," and is also at Constantinople.

JERICHO AND SAMARIA

The site of ancient Jericho has been excavated by Dr. Sellin under German auspices in recent years. Few objects of particular significance were discovered. But the walls of the ancient town were uncovered, and the general character of the streets and buildings disclosed. The work of Mr. Macalister at Gezer was notable. For three seasons he excavated that ancient, historical site, the city given by the king of Egypt to his daughter as a marriage portion upon her arrival in Canaan as the wife of Solomon. The diggings revealed the structure and life of the place from pre-Israelitish to Maccabean times, and many interesting objects, such as images and pottery, were found, but no inscriptions of significance. Still more recently Harvard University has excavated a portion of the hill of Samaria. During the years 1908-1910 Dr. Reisner conducted these operations, uncovering an enormous stairway with a well preserved altar at its foot, a mutilated marble statue of heroic size, probably representing Augustus, a paved platform at the top of the stairway, and massive walls of buildings beyond the platform. A

Herodian temple erected in honor of Augustus was unearthed south of the platform. The remains of private houses of the Greek period were removed and below them were found the massive walls of a large Hebrew building, believed to be the palace of Omri and his son Ahab. This is the most important building yet discovered in Palestine. Nearby have been found fragments of pottery with pen and ink writings in the Hebrew character dating from about the period of Ahab, and written in the same kind of script as that found on the Moabite Stone.

Excavations have also been undertaken at Taanach, Megiddo, Lachish, Gath and other places. Only a beginning has been made, however. With such changes as time is certain to bring in the unhappy government of the country, the work of the explorer will be made easier, and the materials discovered will be of greater service. Thus far the inscriptional finds have been very meager. Besides those mentioned, only the calendar and certain Assyrian tablets from Gezer, a tablet from Lachish, a lion seal from Megiddo, ostraca from Samaria, and stamped jar handles from a few other places have rewarded the labors of the investigators. But there is no reason to doubt that much material of equal or greater value lies undisturbed in the soil of Palestine, and that the future will add rich treasures to the increasing stores of archæology.

Such remains are of the utmost service in the illumination of the biblical books. The uncovering of the

ruins of ancient cities, walls and towers, the exploration of wells, tombs and graves, the unearthing of tools, utensils, coins, statues and idols, and the aid which they afford in the interpretation of ancient civilizations, all help to make clearer the life and character of the Hebrew people, and the nations with whom they came into the most intimate contact. And it is only in the light of all attainable facts regarding these neighboring nations, their customs, culture and religions, that the deeper facts of Hebrew life emerge to view. It is no longer possible to claim any competent knowledge of the Old Testament and the people who produced it without a comprehensive acquaintance with the other nations of their world. And to this knowledge nothing has contributed more helpfully than the monuments and the related archæological material.

XII

The Old Testament in the New

AS the Iliad finds its sequel in the Odyssey, and Paradise Lost in Paradise Regained, so the New Testament forms the essential conclusion to the Old. Without it the Hebrew Scriptures are like a story without a final chapter, a torso without a head. But the parallel with the other writings named is not complete. For the Iliad is greater than the Odyssey, and, as Macaulay eloquently pointed out, the Paradise Regained did not compare in majesty and impressiveness with its great predecessor. With the Bible it is not so. Wonderful as is the Old Testament in literary beauty, in moral urgency and religious passion, the New Testament towers above it in solemn grandeur like Lebanon above the sea.

Nor can they ever be divorced. Numbers of readers delight in the rich treasures of the Iliad who never look into Homer's later work; and probably few of the admirers of Milton's great epic have ever completed its sequel. But the two Testaments are linked together in an indissoluble unity. One cannot know the one without the other. As the cord to the bow, or the hand to the harp, these collections of religious documents are essential to each other. Tertullian phrased this idea

in the lines familiar to the fathers of the church:

Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet;
Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet.

In the Old Testament the New is concealed;
In the New Testament the Old is revealed.

The most casual reader of the Christian Scriptures is impressed with the familiarity of the writers with the books of the older collection, and their frequent use of them for purposes of illustration and enforcement. There are about two hundred and fifty references, either direct or implied, to the writings of the Old Testament on the pages of the New. And some of the books, such as Matthew, Luke, Romans, and Hebrews, seem, in parts, like an anthology of Scripture texts held together by the framework of the argument. Other books, like John, the Corinthian and Galatian epistles, and 1 Peter, fall not far behind in this regard. If Philippians, Colossians, the Thessalonians, Philemon, Titus and the three Johannine epistles show little or no trace of this interest, the difference is not difficult to explain. And in the other books the references are noticeable.

SATURATED WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT

This dependence of the Christian writers upon the Old Testament was inevitable. They were nearly all Jews, and their education and experience were in the atmosphere of the great classic of their race. It formed

their historical and literary background. Its stately sentences were the warp and woof of learned discussion, and colored the talk of the street. To Jesus and his first interpreters the people, places, incidents and figures of speech of the Old Testament were so well known that they formed the most usable material of common speech. And when to this fact one adds the reverence in which the Scripture was held, and its weight when cited in argument, it is evident that the disciples found it of the highest value in the preaching of the new faith. Particularly did they search it for utterances which could be construed as referring in even the most remote manner to Jesus and his ministry.

It would not be venturing too strong a statement to affirm that the writers of the New Testament were literally saturated with the ideas, incidents and phrases of the Old. Quite apart from their conscious efforts to use its language in citation and argument, they fell naturally into the habit of employing its words and sentences in their writings. The instances in which Paul reveals the influence of the Scriptures upon his thinking and utterance are beyond computation. A glance through the epistle to the Romans will show the extent of this in a single document. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is likewise indebted to them for almost numberless terms of speech such as "Our God is a consuming fire," or "Hereby some have

entertained angels unawares." Even in a less conspicuous writer like the author of 1 Peter one finds such reminiscent expressions as "A living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God, elect, precious;" "which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God;" and "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," which, without being exact quotations, carry the reader back at once to the pages of Isaiah and Hosea. Furthermore, that the story of Israel as a nation was familiar as the background of all the thinking of these disciples of the Lord, one needs only to recall the summaries of that history presented in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:16f), the address of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:16), and the splendid review of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

JESUS' USE OF THE SCRIPTURE

Deeply impressive is Jesus' familiarity with the Old Testament, and his frequent use of its material. His references to Moses, Isaiah, Naaman, David, Jonah, Solomon, Noah, Lot, Daniel, the Queen of Sheba, Tyre and Sidon; his frequent citation of favorite passages, such as the words of Hosea, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," and his reliance on the great sanctions of Deuteronomy in the days of his temptation, show something of the value found in the oracles of the nation, and the strength he derived from them.

In studying the citations of Old Testament passages by the writers of the Gospels and the Epistles, one is compelled to note the freedom with which the older words are used. While most of the passages quoted are easily traceable to their source, and, in many instances, the authors are named, yet in several cases the citation is erroneous, or mixed, as when in Luke 3:4-6 the writer has added to the oracle of Isa. 40:1f, a phrase from Exodus 14:13; in Mark 1:2, 3 reference is made to Isaiah, but the passages are from Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3; in 1 Cor. 14:21 a passage from Isa. 28:11 is spoken of as found "in the law," while a few, like those quoted in Rom. 9:15 and Matt. 2:23, are not found in any portion of the Old Testament, and are either quoted from unknown sources or are more or less expressive of general sentiments found in the Scripture. Moreover, there seems to have been no particular effort to quote with nice exactness. In comparing such passages as Matt. 4:14-16 with its original in Isa. 9:1, 2; or Acts 2:17 with Joel 2:28-31; or Rom. 9:25 with Hos. 1:10, 11, or scores of such quotations, it is obvious that the New Testament rendering is not verbally exact. This is due to two causes. First, there was an almost universal employment of the Greek translation known as the LXX, instead of the original Hebrew, which very few understood. The LXX was at best an inexact translation, in many places hardly more than a paraphrase. Yet few of the early Christians knew any other

text of the Old Testament. For example, the author of Hebrews appears not to quote any other than the LXX text save in one passage, Heb. 10:30, and there he seems to follow Paul in Rom. 12:19. And second, most writers and speakers were willing to permit a fairly accurate rendering of the passage to satisfy the occasion. They did not appear to be scrupulous in presenting a precise rendering.

In like manner the facts of Old Testament passages are often used with as much freedom as the language. In the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:16) there is found a curious misstatement regarding the burial place of the patriarchs, due, perhaps, to the speaker or his chronicler. In 1 Corinthians 10:18 Paul speaks of the 23,000 who fell in one day, while in Numbers 25:9, 24,000 is the number. In Hebrews 9:4 the altar of incense is mistakenly placed within the second veil of the temple. Other instances of free handling of Old Testament facts are familiar. They merely illustrate the unstudied approach which the writers of the Christian oracles made to the classics of their race.

But even more interesting is the manner in which at times the statements of the Old Testament are changed from their obvious meaning to make them serve the purpose of the writers. A few examples out of many will illustrate their method, which was in no sense due to any irreverence, or the wish to modify the teachings of the Scriptures. It was merely the fact

that the words, slightly changed, fitted so well the meaning they wished to convey that they asked permission of the original writers, so to speak, to make the transfer of form and meaning. In Psalm 104:4 there is a fine reference to Jehovah's use of the forces of nature for his gracious ends: "Who maketh the winds his messengers, his ministers a flaming fire." In Hebrews 1:4 the author, wishing to show that the angels cannot compare in glory with the Son, uses the passage in this way: "Who maketh his angels winds, his messengers a flame of fire." Hosea, in a moment of fierce indignation against the impenitent people of Israel, confident that God would never again repent of his purpose to destroy the rebellious nation, summons death and the grave to do their worst: "Shall I ransom them from the power of the grave? Shall I redeem them from death? O, death, where are thy plagues? O, grave, where is thy destruction? Repentance shall be hidden from mine eyes." But Paul, in his glorious euthanasia, using the words in precisely the opposite sense, cries, "O death, where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?" and precedes this quotation with one from Isaiah, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Still more familiar is the bold appropriation by the evangelists of the words of Isaiah 40:3 regarding the voice that cries to exiled Judah, "Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." By only a minor

change, hardly more than of punctuation, the entire meaning of the passage is altered, and it is applied to the voice of John the Baptist crying in the desert. To the writers of the New Testament such uses of the older Scriptures must have been not only permissible but necessary. And for this reason they are valuable aids to our understanding of the regard in which they held these oracles.

ARE THESE PREDICTIONS?

And this leads appropriately to the so-called predictions in the Old Testament, which are said to have been "fulfilled" in the New. Much of the older apologetic of the church was concerned with the prophetic anticipations of events in the life of Jesus, and their striking realization in his ministry. Long lists of such passages were cited as proofs of the miraculous foresight of these earlier ministers of God. The argument from prophecy has largely shifted from this ground today, and is based upon much more substantial foundations. Most of the claims made by eager but uncritical exponents of the Bible require examination and correction. The great forward-looking hopes of the Old Testament saints are a luminous and convincing feature of the Scriptures, but they move on levels far higher than the minute and circumstantial "predictions" formerly exploited.

One has but to study these New Testament refer-

ences to the older writings in the light of careful comparison to be warned away from the error of regarding them as the realization of predictive effort. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this principle. Hosea, referring to a notable experience of the ancient nation, says: "When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt." The writer of the First Gospel, feeling the appropriateness of the words to the return of Jesus from the refuge in Egypt writes, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt did I call my son.'" The evangelist knew that in the event those earlier words came to new meaning, were filled out, fulfilled. But would even a casual reader assert, in the light of the entire message of Hosea, that the words had at first the remotest application to Jesus?

In a critical moment in the story of Jerusalem, when a powerful king of Assyria had invaded the north regions of Zebulon and Naphtali, and seemed about to march on Judah, Isaiah calmed the perturbed souls of his fellow-citizens with the confident assurance that Tiglath-pileser and his invading army should soon be expelled from the land. That message is recorded in Chapter 9 of the prophet's book. The writer of the First Gospel perceived the appropriateness of these words to the light and comfort-bringing arrival of Jesus in the same regions centuries afterward, and did not hesitate to apply them to the event, saying, "That

it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet." Yet here again, and in scores of similar instances, no one who reads the prophet's words in the light of their context would think of regarding them as predictions referring to Jesus.

It is not too much to say that there is not an instance in the New Testament of any such incident in the life of Jesus that holds to any Old Testament passage the relation of fulfilment to prediction. It will be shown presently that the great prophetic movement of the Hebrew interpreters of God anticipated One who was to come and bring deliverance to his people and the world. But none of the words which the evangelists so freely appropriate from the Scriptures as "fulfilled" in the incidents of Jesus' career have other value than that of significant coincidence, which the friends of the Lord were quick to perceive and utilize in the interest of his wider ministry. Indeed one of these very writers (1 Pet. 1:20) was at pains to affirm that "no prophecy is of any private interpretation," i. e., refers to any one event in the life of Jesus. But many such events were made more impressive to Jewish minds by being connected with venerable words that seemed to live again and complete themselves in the life of the Lord.

It is this aspect of Jesus' exalted place in the regard of his disciples which helps us to go a step further, and find some explanation for their astonishing and au-

dacious employment of other utterances of the Old Testament as applying to him. It is clear that they searched the Scriptures with eager intent to find in them phrases that fitted the life or the ministry of the Master. To their surprise and delight, they found the Scripture full of such words. The older book was "gravida Christi," pregnant with Christ. Statements that originally applied to some king or saint of the olden time now seemed to glow with a new meaning as the reader thought of the Lord. The cries of martyrs or the laments of persecuted souls voiced in too vivid a manner the sufferings of the Savior not to refer to him in some manner. The explanatory context that warns us against the supposition that the speaker had any other than his own griefs in mind, or could have been interested in a distant divine sufferer, fell away from their thoughts as they read the pregnant phrases and reflected upon their holy Lord, the victim of outrageous violence. They knew him to be the Servant of God for the new day. Whatever, therefore, had been said regarding Israel, the ancient servant of God, or any of the saints who, through the years had lifted to heaven the white flowers of blameless and sacrificial lives, must also be true of him in whom all the strivings of elect souls were brought to completion.

With confidence born of this conviction, Peter affirmed that the words of the Sixteenth Psalm were spoken of Jesus (Acts 2:25, 25f.). In the same mood the

writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews applied to him the words of God to David regarding his posterity (2 Sam. 7:14); the appeal of a psalmist to the angels, or the gods, to worship Jehovah (Ps. 97:7); the reference to humanity in the Eighth Psalm; the words of God, through a psalmist, to the newly chosen king of Israel (Ps. 2:7), and the words of God giving assurance of royal and priestly power to another king of the nation (Ps. 110:4). These are only examples of a large group that might be cited. The careful reader who is at pains to study the Old Testament passages perceives at once that their writers were thinking and speaking of matters in no way connected with the life or ministry of our Lord. The claim often made that there was a double meaning in the prophetic words, a second significance in the thought, is a violation of every canon of straightforward and honest interpretation. Skepticism has been quick to seize upon such assertions made by Christian apologists, and to charge the entire argument based on prophecy with disingenuousness and perversion of the facts.

RABBINIC METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

But it is wholly unjust to the writers of the New Testament. It must be remembered that they lived in the atmosphere of Jewish speculation regarding the Scriptures, and that many did not hesitate to regard the figurative and allegorical uses of the Old Testament

as even more important than the plain statement of fact. One sees examples of this influence in the writings of more than one of the New Testament authors. For example, Paul employs the Jewish legend that the rock from which Moses drew water actually followed the Israelites through the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4); he refers to the veil Moses put over his face, as a symbol of the veil of ignorance that had fallen over Jewish minds in the reading of their Scriptures (2 Cor. 3:7-16); he employs the two mountains, Sinai and Zion, and the two women, Hagar and Sarah, as figures illustrating the relations of the law and the gospel (Gal. 4:21-31); and he uses the distinction between the singular and the plural of the word "seed" (Gal. 3:6) in a manner that seems to us wholly fantastic, but was quite characteristic of rabbinic practice. In a similar manner the writer of 1 Peter makes the Ark of Noah a type of baptism (1 Pet. 3:21); and the author of Hebrews makes the tabernacle a type of the church (Chapts. 8, 9), and Melchizedek of Christ (Chapt. 7:1f). The intelligent reader of the Old Testament does not need to be told that in their original setting none of these persons or objects had the slightest connection with the life of Jesus, or the Christian message. At the same time it must be borne in mind that in writing to a group of people like the first Christians, most of whom were either Jews or acquainted to a marked degree with the Old Testament books, there was great

value in the use of the materials of that older literature as illustrations throwing some sort of light upon the principles of the gospel. To modern readers, unacquainted with the dialectic of the Jewish schools, some of these references seem remote and unconvincing. But no doubt they had their value in the thought of the apostles, and in no instance that we can perceive did they employ them without full warrant of the literary customs of their age and people. If, therefore, one is puzzled at times to find the connection between an Old Testament character or object and the New Testament idea it is employed to symbolize, it must be remembered that to the disciples, as to Jesus himself, the Hebrew Scriptures were the literary storehouse from which there could be drawn at need all weapons of defense and all supplies of prophetic assurance.

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

But the most illuminating and convincing feature of the relation between the Old Testament and the New is the forward-looking attitude of the prophetic ministers of the older order. Israel's golden age lay in the future, not the past. The purposes of God were not completed in the broken and marred history of the nation. The redemptive function of the tribes of the Lord seemed to fail, as they went down in political disaster. But ever the hope of survival and success burned in the hearts of choice and elect servants of God. That

hope was often political and crass, but it had higher qualities of redemptive and sacrificial passion. Isaiah saw hints of it (Chapts. 9, 11, etc.); Jeremiah, in the Book of Consolation, recorded some of its features (Chapts. 31, 32); the Evangelical Prophet made it still more vivid, keeping it ever true to its national rooting in the experiences of Israel, but revealing at last the full glory of the hope in the coming of One who should both represent and transcend the nation, and bring redemption to all mankind (Isa. 40-55).

It is in the atmosphere of this real expectation that Jesus moved, and it was in the complete assurance that these hopes were centered in him that he went forward with his sublime task. In the Old Testament there were many notes of suffering and depression, such as are found in Psalms 22 and 69. There were confident anticipations of better days and of redemptive ministries from which a new nation and a new world would emerge (cf. Isa. 61:1f). Jesus took to himself all these prophetic words, conscious that in him alone could they find their realization (see Lu. 4:16-21). But most of all did he find in the sublime words of the Song of the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12) the picture of his sacrificial career. Written originally of the nation crushed into the dust of Babylonian exile, yet animated with the deathless hope of survival and service, Jesus knew that the only true fulfilment of such expectations was not in the nation but in himself. For that reason

he laid calm and confident hands on all such oracles, and with complete insight into their further reaches of anticipation, applied them to himself and his holy labor for the world.

In the light of these facts, one understands such deeply impressive language as that used by the Savior again and again to his disciples, in the effort to instruct them regarding his function as the world's Redeemer. It was not to specific and detailed predictions of his life that he referred when he spoke of his approaching passion, for there are none such. But back into the treasured records of Hebrew sufferers, of prophetic martyrs and of patient witnesses of the truth he reached, and gathered up their agitated phrases, their broken cries, their tremulous hopes for better days, and made them his own. Hosea (Chapt. 6:2) had with broken heart besought the nation to turn from its waywardness to God, and had said, "He hath smitten us, but he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us, and on the third day he will raise us up and we shall live." So we hear Jesus saying to the disciples, "All the things that are written by the prophets shall be done unto the Son of man. For he shall be delivered up to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again." He reproved his friends for their slowness of heart "to believe all that the prophets had spoken," and "opened to them the Scriptures," ex-

plaining to them that it was written that the Christ must suffer, and rise the third day (cf. Lu. 24:25-49).

On such exalted levels do the real facts of Messianic prophecy lie. If something seems to be lost in the change of attitude which is necessitated by a frank facing of the facts, much more is gained. Prophecy is perceived to be no mere set of predictions regarding events in the life of the Lord, but an onward sweep of the divine purpose, a progressive realization of the truths and ideals toward which the Spirit of God was evermore leading the saints. These ideals were at last made clear by Jesus, and in the consciousness of that sublime fulfilment he rightly claimed all the sanctions of the past. He knew that the portrait drawn by the prophets of old, not in the carefully traced lines of predictive detail, but in the bold strokes of world anticipation, was his own. The prophets described not a person; but an office, a function, a service to be rendered to Israel and the world. They did not predict the life of Jesus, but they foreshadowed the ministry of the Messiah. It was the task of Jesus and his friends to make clear to the men of their time that he was that Messiah, and that the picture they had in the Old Testament was in reality his own. So to the Jews he said one day, "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life. And little as you perceive it, they testify of me." Then he added sadly, "But ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."

XIII

The Inspiration of the Bible

IN the Jahvist narrative of creation there is the statement that the Lord formed man out of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul. It is this impressive figure of speech which has become familiar in the effort to characterize men or writings, works of genius or products of art, which make unusual appeal to the race. There seems no better method of describing them than to say that they are inspired. And the picture which forms in the mind is that of a divine inbreathing, which conveys to some a unique quality of excellence, urgency or power.

The word as applied to the Scriptures, or at least to certain parts of them, has a warrant in the books themselves. And yet it is so variously employed that it lacks clearness in popular thinking, and connotes many different things to different people. When one speaks of the inspiration of Dante or Shakespeare, of Raphael or Fra Angelico, of Handel or Beethoven, the meaning is obvious. It is the unusual gift of the men, or the significant nature of their literary or artistic creations which is suggested by the term. But when the inspiration of the Bible is the subject of reflection, it is less easy to propose a definition that will abide the test. Perhaps it is a misfortune that the same

word should have been employed to describe qualities so diverse. Certainly no description that serves to set forth the unique elements of poetry, drama, sculpture, painting or architecture is quite adequate to characterize the qualities in virtue of which the Bible is called inspired. There remains in it something else not explained.

WHAT IS INSPIRATION ?

Reference has been made more than once in this series of studies to the fact that most of the holy books of the various faiths claim some sort of inspiration and authority. This is true of the Vedic Hymns, the Law of Hamnurabi, the Avesta, the Pitikas, the Granth, and the Koran. In each of the great religions there has been in the thought of the worshipers the conviction that the literature produced in the atmosphere of the deity or leader they revere is divine. Nor should there be any doubt of this fact on the part of any discerning and reverent soul. God speaks to man by divers portions and in various ways, through many teachers and in many writings. None of the sacred books that have lifted any part of the race to new altitudes of thinking and conduct has lacked something of the Spirit of God. But such phrases as one may with complete assurance apply to these literatures fall short of a proper and satisfying characterization of the Bible.

What is meant, then, by this term as it is used of the Old Testament and the New? And what are the arguments advanced to assert and defend the claim? In the

attempt to answer these questions it is necessary to present the arguments before attempting the definition.

The most common reasons presented for the inspiration of the Bible are the following:

1. We of the Christian nations have inherited our belief in its inspiration. Our ancestors have accepted this view without questioning, and to us it has come with the sanction of their lives.

2. The church has through all its history affirmed the inspired character of the Scriptures. To those who accept the authority of the church, of whatever order, this is a sufficient guarantee.

3. The Bible claims its own inspiration. The words of 2 Timothy 3:16 are classic: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." In the closing book of the New Testament are found these solemn words: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18,19).

4. There is a certain self-attesting quality in the books themselves. When the Bible, rightly understood, makes its appeal to mind and heart, it requires no further

validation. Its message comes with a sense of urgency possessed by no other literature known to the race.

These are the most important arguments presented in defense of the doctrine of inspiration. There are others that might be mentioned, but they are all in some manner related to these or included in them. Perhaps they should be scrutinized somewhat to determine if possible whether they are really valid. Probably they will make differing appeals to different minds.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE ARGUMENTS

The argument from the faith of our fathers has the right to most serious consideration. It is a truth past all doubting that much of the heroism, steadfastness and virtue of the Christian generations behind us was due to the faith the fathers had in the Bible and its inspiration as the Word of God. Lacking that confidence, life would have seemed little worth to them. Our age has learned to revise many of their opinions and discredit many of their beliefs. The world in which we live is a wider, freer, world. Many of the little systems of the past—political, social, religious—have had their day and ceased to be. But there was something majestic and enduring about the Christian faith and character of those grand men of the past that we may well covet. Is this not sufficient to validate their view of the Scriptures? Some will think it is, but in the changing order of our time a more certain ground is needed. Men must have better grounds of assurance

than the faith of other men, even such men as we have known and revered.

Still less satisfactory is the argument from church authority. To the Roman Catholic or the adherent of the Greek Orthodox Church it might be sufficient. Even to a Protestant it is not without deep significance that the religious body to which he belongs has through the years maintained a stout and unwavering faith in the inspiration of the Bible. But it must not be forgoten that the Roman Church which made the first formal and official declaration of the inspired and canonical nature of the Scriptures was the very organization that did most to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. After due allowance has been made for Protestant overstatement on this theme, it must be conceded that the Roman Church has never been favorable to popular use of the Bible, and that it is only today repairing the mistake it made in other centuries, by giving a version of the Scriptures to its people. Why should the book have been so long withheld if it was inspired of God?

At first glance the argument from the statements of the Bible itself seems convincing. What more could one wish than the reference of an apostolic writer, whether Paul or another, to "all Scriptures given by inspiration of God"? But a moment's study of the text shows that the writer could have had in mind at best only the Old Testament, the only Scriptures the early Christians knew; unless, as seems not improbable, the term as used in his day included also the apocryphal books. And as to the strong

words of the writer of Revelation, no one would assert that they refer to more than that single document; for in his day there could have been no collection of New Testament books. So far, therefore, as validation for the Bible is to be sought in its own words, the argument lacks the essential element of application to the books in which the unique quality of inspiration is most in evidence—the great messages of the New Testament. Moreover, if the inspiration of a work is to rest upon its claim for itself, then the Koran should far outrank the Bible. It is apparent that elsewhere must one look for the real grounds of certainty.

The last of the arguments above named goes much further toward an adequate statement than any of the others. It may seem at first that it is the least definite of the four reasons urged. Probably this is true. Certain it is that the inspiration of the Bible eludes exact definition precisely because it differs from any quality that bears that name in any other literature or product of human genius. But it is not without reason that one may urge the force of the appeal which the Scriptures make on their own behalf to those who give them the attention which they demand. They make real and urgent claim to reverence and obedience. They bring near to the human soul the sanctions of the divine life and the realities of spiritual experience. They are self-attesting, because their demonstration of their uniqueness is more convincing than any arguments the theologian can frame in their behalf.

If it were left to human choice to prescribe the character of a book that should serve as the supreme religious literature of the race, the fullest embodiment in literary form of the divine ideal, what would such a book be, and what would it be proper to expect of it? At first thought it seems very easy to prescribe its qualities. For example, it should be written by the hand of God, or by some group of men particularly prepared for their task by divine selection and supernatural endowments. The book thus produced should be a clear and unvarying record of the divine mind, with no suggestion of mistake in matters of fact, norms of conduct, or forms of expression. Further than this, its transmission to the present time, both in copy and translation, should be faithful and inerrent, for there would be little value in an originally perfect document that was spoiled in the process of delivery to the world of today. Such, one would suppose, would be the nature of a satisfactory Bible, to which one might with assurance attach the title of the Word of God.

WHAT WE SHOULD LIKE

Yet nothing is clearer than the fact that we have no such book as that. Furthermore, no such book has ever been known. The claims the Jews made for the five books of Moses amounted almost to that, and the same is true of the Mohammedan assertions regarding the Koran, and of certain other religious groups in behalf of their particular scriptures. But no such claim can be

maintained for a moment in the presence of the obvious facts. The Bible makes no demand to be considered a superhuman oracular volume. It possesses the characteristics of its various writers. Each speaks in his own manner. It would be impossible to attribute a sermon of Isaiah's to Jeremiah, or a Pauline epistle to Luke.

This is one of the chief reasons why the doctrine of verbal inspiration has been discarded as incapable of proof and incompatible with the evident facts. If the divine mind dictated to the writers of the Scriptures the substance and form of the writings, there could not be the individuality that characterizes these documents. There is a striking unity of purpose disclosed in them; but their style, vocabulary and point of view are as various as their names. Each speaks out of his own experience, and uses his own particular equipment of knowledge and skill. Whatever definition of inspiration is constructed must include these facts.

Nor were the writers of the Bible safeguarded supernaturally or in any other manner from the usual historical and scientific errors to which the men of their age were liable. Their work is not a text-book on either of these subjects. They spoke of events of the past as they understood them. They referred to the facts of nature as they were known in their day. But the themes with which they were concerned were not in these regions. They used them merely as illustrations of God's purposes for the race, and the truth they were interested to affirm was of vastly

greater import than any illustration by which they sought to enforce it.

In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis there are two separate and varying narratives of creation. They do not agree with each other, nor do either of them agree with what scientists would now regard as a satisfactory description of the origin of things. Yet both teach the truth that at the beginning, whenever and whatever it was, God was the Creator, and man was the climax of the process. The men who put these two varying accounts into the same book were not unaware of their differences, but they found in them moral and religious values which made their divergences negligible. The Old Testament and the New exhibit many such phenomena. Whatever doctrine of inspiration be framed, it must be hospitable to facts like these.

The Bible is not a book whose ethical teachings are all of the same type or value. It discloses the depths to which human nature can at times descend, and out of which it must be lifted. The moral levels of each generation, as set down in the Old Testament, were subject to the criticism and correction of a later age. A law is not final, a custom is not praiseworthy, merely because it is found in the Bible. It may be cited for correction, or as an illustration of crude and discarded usage. Such facts must be included in the definition of inspiration.

The Bible is not a book whose main purpose is the chronicling either of miracle or fulfilled prediction.

Miracle there is, and prophecy of a majestic and compelling sort. But these are not the fundamental elements of the book. In fact, every miracle and every prophecy could be eliminated from the Scripture, and its supreme values would not be disturbed. Something would be lost, it is true, and we prefer the books as they are, when rightly interpreted. But their purpose lies on higher levels than these phases, however interesting they may be. And any definition of inspiration we may adopt must meet this test.

QUALITIES OF THE BIBLE

The Bible discloses certain features in virtue of which we have a right to call it inspired. It is a collection of books produced by men living in the current of the greatest religious movement known to history. It was a movement with small beginnings, but with gradually expanding force. It began in the tribal experiences of a small group of people living in "the least of all lands," and culminated in the supreme Life of the ages, and the most vital and pervasive religious institution ever known.

The Bible is a competent record of that movement, and it presents graphic and convincing portraits of some of those forceful personages who contributed to the unique religious education thus organized. In the lives of those men and in the history which they helped to make, God was present as in no other experiences of the past. That was the singular quality of Israel's life. It was no wilful and capricious selection of a favored race. It was the

employment of the best available instrument for a great purpose. And that purpose manifests itself in the documents which record that experience, and this quality in the documents, for want of a better term, we name inspiration.

The Bible is the collection of books in which more evidently than in any other literature there is discovered the profoundest truths of religion. There are pictured the lives of men like Abraham and Moses, who made sure of the reality of God; men like Amos and Isaiah who discovered and declared God's world-ruling sovereignty; men who like Hosea and Jeremiah penetrated the secret of the love of God even for the most unworthy; and One there was who knew the possibility and preciousness of communion with God, and set the world in a way to a transfiguration of life by the discovery.

In this book are found the personalities most worthy of reverence. In loyalty to ideals, in the possession of broadening faith and deeper insight, in the appreciation of the supreme religious values, such men as Samuel, David, Micah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Paul and Peter take rank as the pioneers in the vanguard of the world's progress toward the life of the spirit.

The Bible reveals to us, in glowing hope and partial realization, that kingdom of God, that community of redeemed souls and redemptive forces, of which Jesus was always speaking. By its help we are able to find our way to God. By its direction we discern his will for us as the most worthful program of life. By the suggestions it

offers and the sources of power it reveals we discover that we can actually do his will and fulfill his purposes. By the study of this book redemption, atonement, the life of trust, the glory of rewarding service, and the certainty of the life eternal are brought within the circle of personal possession. Such values as these are not to be found in like degree in any other literature. And the quality of exhibiting them in such telling manner we may call inspiration.

When the demand is made for a more definite and compact description of this strange quality, one has to respond that it is not to be compressed into any neat and convenient form. It would be easy to define the sort of inspiration the Jewish rabbis affirmed of their torah, but that is too formal and mechanical to satisfy. It would be equally simple a process to apply the usual categories of literary and artistic passion to the books before us. But this is too pale a figure to meet the need. The most competent statement that can be made is that the inspiration of the Bible is the total spirit and power it reveals. In the last issue one means by its inspiration exactly those marks of uniqueness and urgency which it exhibits, and which make it incomparably greater than any other book in the world.

The wonder is that the Bible shares with other books so many of their marks of human workmanship and limitation, and yet possesses a spirit that sets it in a place apart from all the rest. It is this which baffles definition,

and yet is so unescapable a quality of the Scripture. The proof that the book is inspired is its power to inspire. It is the sum of the elements thus made evident to the reflective mind that warrants one in speaking of the Bible as the Word of God, and believing in its enduring value. It is in recognition of these unique qualities that one may apply to the Scripture as a whole the words of the Master engraved as a text in the walls of the building of the British and Foreign Bible Society, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

XIV

The Authority of the Bible

VIEWED from certain points of approach, it is unfortunate that the Bible has been called the Word of God. The intelligent student finds no difficulty in this title, for he accepts it in the light of all the facts freely spread upon its pages. In comparison with any other of the world's sacred books he finds that it contains in a unique degree the message of God to the race. But to one who is unwilling or unable to pay the price of a competent inquiry into the nature of the book, the title is misleading. It implies far more than the Bible is prepared to guarantee. For even a casual reading of the documents that make up this wonderful collection shows that they were not written by God, nor even by men who were speaking with supernatural and inerrant knowledge of God's will. No error has ever resulted in greater discredit to the Scripture or injury to Christianity than that of attributing to the Bible such a miraculous origin and nature as to make it an infallible standard of morals and religion. That it contains the word of God in a sense in which that expression can be used of no other book is true. But its finality and authority do not reside in all of its utterances, but in those great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain

peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the word of God to man.

Various opinions have been held as to the seat of authority in religion. By some it is placed in the church. And it is not to be doubted that there is a certain moral authority in an organization so revered and efficient as the Church of Christ in the world. But those who hold this view are usually at pains to insist that the definition of the church that may thus be regarded as possessing this special authority is to be limited to the organization to which they happen to belong. No advocate of the supreme right of the Christian organization to the place of control would concede that authority to the universal church. It is rather some particular church that he has in mind.

Others have affirmed that the seat of authority is to be found in the Bible. This was particularly the contention of the later reformers, who felt the need of some authority to oppose to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the infallible church. And this led, as has been shown, to fantastic claims for the Bible, such as it never made for itself, nor was prepared to support. The traditional authorships of the Bible were insisted upon as essential to its validity. Some of the theologians almost outdid the rabbinical apologists in their extravagant claims for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. One of their sayings was, "He who says that Moses wrote even one verse of his own knowledge

is a denier and despiser of the Word of God." Here the doctrine of inspiration and authority was carried to the limits of the grotesque. Hardly less fantastic was the claim of some of the post-reformation divines regarding the inerrant character of the text of Scripture. Dr. John Owen boldly asserted that the vowel points of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament were inspired. This would be equal to the insistence that the versification, paragraphing and punctuation of our English Bible were determined in heaven.

LIMITATIONS OF AUTHORITY

The Bible, as a whole, is not an ultimate authority to one who thoughtfully studies it. That is, it cannot be taken as inerrant and final in all its parts. The command of Samuel to Saul to exterminate the Amalekites would not be regarded by anyone as a proper order for our age. The conduct of David in war would be reprehensible in the thought of our generation, just as it was to the later prophets of Israel. The toleration of polygamy, slavery and blood revenge, which were wholly within the circle of permitted conduct in an earlier time, would be impossible now. In other words, the Bible is not an authority to us on all the questions with which it deals. The anger of Paul at the high priest who ordered him smitten in court, and his advice to Timothy about taking a little wine, we do not accept as examples for ourselves, though we see the

naturalness of the manner in which they are mentioned.

Those who accept the Bible as the holiest and most authoritative book we possess always reserve the right to discriminate between those utterances which justify themselves to the conscience and intelligence, and those which fail to do so. It is inevitable that one who studies the Scriptures should bring every statement and precept to the bar of his own sense of right, and judge it by that standard. We have to confess that even in the New Testament the same discrimination is exercised by every thoughtful reader. The rabbinical arguments of Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians make no such appeal to us as does his doctrine of justification by faith. The summary punishment of Ananias and his wife leaves us doubtful and questioning, while the message of Peter to Cornelius and his household meets our highest approval. And even in the life of Jesus the same differences appear. So difficult are the narratives of the demons sent into the swine and the cursed fig tree that many who hold without hesitance to the inspiration and authority of the Book wonder if there has not been some error in the record at these points. They seem inconsistent with all the other things we are told concerning our Lord. This makes it evident that the authority which we recognize as so truly present in the biblical record does not inhere in the book as such, nor in any particular portion of it. But rather it is found in the appeal which the Scrip-

ture as a whole makes to the moral sense within humanity, and in particular the urgency of the appeal made by certain parts of the record, notably the Gospels and the Pauline epistles.

In the recognition of this fact is found the reason for that controlling influence which the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, has exercised upon the mind and conscience of the world through the centuries. The Book asks nothing for itself in the way of sovereignty over the minds of men. But it exercises that power by the sheer force of its appeal to all that is best within us. Its authority is not formal and arbitrary. It consists rather in the outreaching of the Spirit of God in the men who wrote its various parts to the souls of those who study it. It is because the men who speak through the pages of the Bible find us at levels deeper than any other writers we know that they possess for us the element of authority.

THE STANDARD OF AUTHORITY

And the creation of the standard of right within the souls of the advancing generation is one of the achievements of the Bible. The only standard of right thinking and conduct possessed by anyone is the result of his education in religion and morals. Barbarous peoples approve and practice customs which are revolting to the moral sense of the enlightened, because such practices are not inconsistent with the only standards

of morals they possess. Their consciences are quite undisturbed. The people of ancient Israel saw nothing unusual or wrong in polygamy, slavery and cruel treatment of war prisoners. The teachings even of their noblest teachers in the early ages of their history did not disapprove such things. The authority of those teachers was hospitable to the manners of such books as Joshua and Judges. That authority does not reach and convince us today. And the very men who followed those first moral leaders of the nation helped to correct those low standards of living. The prophets of one age denounced and forbade conduct like that of their predecessors. Through the centuries of history the advancing groups of those who were sensitive to the leadings of the divine Spirit pointed the upward way of justice, mercy and humility. And the consummation of that process was reached in the life and teachings of our Lord.

It is the record of this progress that the Bible presents. The great personalities of which it speaks make their appeal to the moral sense of the world at just the level they occupied. There are those today who find nothing objectionable in the conduct of the patriarchs. They would be content with a social order in which customs like theirs could prevail. Polygamy is yet practiced in parts of the world, and even in our own land, and is justified on biblical grounds. For such justification, of course, its advocates have to go

back to an age from which the enlightened portion of the race has made long departures. And it is the Bible itself which has been the chief instrument in that moral progress. To those who rightly understand this Book, by letting it offer its own explanation of its development and purpose, there is no longer the slightest authority found in it for polygamy. And the same thing may be said in reference to slavery, blood revenge, impurity, falsehood and every other evil thing. The Book, through its noblest voices, and most of all through the voice of Jesus, has made the low and partial standards of the past increasingly unconvincing to those who have seen the larger vision of the kingdom of God.

The authority of the Bible resides in its enlightening and compelling power, which lays upon the soul the imperatives of pure and sacrificial living. It is not an authority which inheres in an institution or a book, but in the sense of rightness created within the soul by all gracious influences, and chiefly by the Bible itself. The Book does not claim to be a carefully prepared manual of conduct. It refuses to accept responsibility for the claim that all of its utterances are rules to be followed. Rather it records the story of the most notable movement in history for the enfranchisement of the human soul from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, lust, hatred and pride, and it tells us something of the men who were leaders in that movement which

found its full expression in Jesus. It asks us to study the lives and ideals of these great souls, and make them, as far as they find us with their majestic appeal, our friends and examples. In some of them, early in the movement, we shall find little to admire or imitate. Yet every one, in the measure of his knowledge and power, was a pioneer in the great adventure of making a new world.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

The life of Jesus, which is exhibited only in this literature, is the climax of this process. We do not know very much about him, as compared with that which we should like to know. All the records of his life would not fill an issue of the morning paper. Furthermore, the only records we have of his life come to us through the writings of men who did not themselves fully understand the character they were seeking to make known. They could only do the best they were able in making their contemporaries and those who should follow them comprehend something of that life that to them was past all language wonderful. In the final issue of facts, it is that life which has become the authoritative norm of conduct for the race. Imperfectly presented as it is, and not fully understood either by its first interpreters or any of later time, the life of Jesus is increasingly the disclosure of the soul of God, the exhibition of a normal, perfect

human character and the center of the world's desire.

The Book that can present a life like that, under whatever limitations, is certain to have a unique note of authority for all who have the least sensitiveness to moral ideals. It finds us and holds us. It follows us through all the ways in which we try to find rest in our search for life abundant. It waits for us at the partings of ways. It beckons to us when we turn into bypaths where we think to find another sort of good. It pursues us with swift insistent feet all the long day of life. It will not let us go. It is this divine and terrible authority which follows us with the whips and scourges of the eternal love, until we dash ourselves into the abysses of unreturning refusal, or take with gladness the cup of life from the hand of God.

It is conceivable that we could have had a book of rules, which would have been a final and infallible guide to conduct. But the Bible is not that, though some men have so claimed; and others have sought to compile from its contents such an anthology of thinking and behavior. But this is futile. The first essential of the holy life is the responsibility of a discriminating choice among the options offered by life. If someone could draw up for us such a schedule and guarantee us salvation on terms of compliance with it, there would be strong temptation to close with the proposal. So strong, indeed, that some who claim the right have offered just such a bargain in the name of the church.

But salvation cannot be purchased upon any such cheap and easy terms. Salvation is character. Character can be gained only by the agony of deliberate and convinced choice, and the struggle to make that choice controlling in life. So in the end of the day, the authority of the Bible is just the appeal which it makes to us to close with the supreme opportunity, as Jesus did, and live his life after him. The authority of the Bible is the authority of the supreme Life of which it speaks. And linked with it are all the other forceful lives in that same group, in the measure in which they make to us the appeal of character and teaching.

REAL SEAT OF AUTHORITY

For this reason the authority of the Bible cannot be formal, arbitrary or capricious. It cannot consist in oracular words and phrases. It cannot inhere in rules of living. These all may have value, but the power of the Bible in human life lies in its ability to inspire in those whom it really reaches a principle of thought and life which makes them a law unto themselves. Out of the best that the prophets and apostles have spoken one may organize a norm of living which becomes compelling. To him the character and message of the Lord become final. He has in some competent measure the mind of Christ. Within the enlightened and loyal soul itself there is set up a standard of ethics and religion to which the appeal of every de-

cision must be referred. Into the creation of this standard many factors enter. But it must be confessed that the Bible is the most impressive. And in this fact, and the control which issues from it into the lives of the saints of all the years, lies its unique authority.

A few days ago a friend sent me a copy of a book which had come into his hand, and which purported to tell the truth about the Bible. The author assumed that the church and the world have long been imposed upon by a book which is, to say the least, very commonplace, and at the worst very misleading and dangerous. The text of the volume was Mr. Ingersoll's saying, "Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible." It devoted several chapters to the familiar facts of the origin and literary character of the Bible, taking it for granted that if one became aware that the book possesses those features of human composition, which are the commonplaces of all intelligent Bible study today, and have been set forth at some length in the studies in this series, he would at once abandon his faith in the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Then he presented a long list of quotations from Christian writers, setting forth the evident marks of the process by which the Bible came into being and has been transmitted to us, which he had carefully taken out of their context, and exhibited as confessions and admissions on the part of friends of the Bible that it was untrustworthy and self-condemning. From this he proceeded

to a minute examination of the book to discover errors of historical or scientific statement. Still assuming that the Bible makes claim to be an infallible and inerrant authority upon all matters included in its pages, he drew the conclusion that it was fraudulent and misleading. But not content with this, he proceeded to cite the instances of lying, cheating, stealing, murder, war, bloody sacrifices, cannibalism, witchcraft, slavery, polygamy, lust, obscenity, intemperance, injustice to women, tyranny and intolerance, and without attempting to discriminate between the many cases in which the types of conduct are held up to scorn and condemnation, and the few in which they exhibit the crude state of an early social order, he insisted that all alike illustrated the immoral and pernicious nature of the book, and the reason why it should be banished from the world.

ATTACKS UPON THE BIBLE

There are circles, doubtless, in which a book of this sort might find welcome and even applause. But they would have to be among such as have only a belated idea of what the Bible really is and what it is daily doing for the race. It is only a totally false theory regarding the Bible that can give an instant's significance to such a book. Mr. Ingersoll was able to succeed in his attacks upon the Bible because most of the people in his audiences still held the mechanical, obsolete view of the supernatural character of the book,

and its infallible reliability on all matters which it discusses. The breath of the fresh study of the Bible which came with the critical method blew away all chance of appeal in that manner to the outworn ideas of the past, and today Mr. Ingersoll's type of attack upon the Bible is as dead as its author. Those who in the manner of this writer follow that line of argument are dealing with a generation which knows too much as to the actual nature of the Bible and the claims made for it by its interpreters to be misled or disturbed.

It is like ridiculing a man for the weaknesses, the ignorance and the freakish behavior of his childhood. The facts are all there if one wishes to spend the time to compile them. But what is their value? It is like visiting a hospital, not to learn of its remedial and inspiring service to the community, but to take note only of its sewage, to rake over its garbage, and to peer into its repulsive evidences of the wastage wrought by medication and surgery. Every intelligent person knows that a hospital has this necessary and unpleasant side. It is no discredit to its work. But such are the things for which none but scavengers search. The Bible has also these features. It has the evidences of the immature and false ideas out of which it was the task of the Spirit of God to lead the race. It has some terrible chapters, proofs of the depths to which the race can fall. But no true picture can be drawn of the long and slow evolution of moral ideals without hints of the

primitive life out of which escape was at last made. The Bible reveals with a frankness which is at once startling and undeniable the sins that war against the soul and the low standards of morals prevailing in ages when those sins were counted virtues. But no one with power to discriminate between childhood and maturity would betray himself into the disingenuous assertion that all alike meet the approval of the Book.

A volume that made any such impression upon its readers could not hold for a moment the place which the Bible has in the regard of the race. Its overwhelming vindication, its ground of right to reverence, are found in its appeal to the intelligent and sensitive spirit, its illustrious history as the guide of those movements which are bringing in the new day, its ability to change the current of history out of its former channels in the direction pointed out by the Spirit of God, its power to transform nations from savagery and superstition to intelligence and virtue, and its daily record of transfigured lives, the real "twice-born" men of our age. In such fruits its best defense will ever be found. And after all the superficial theories of its origin and nature have faded from remembrance, and all assaults upon its character have fallen by their own futility, it will still continue on its beneficent way, the enlightener of the nations, the record of the divine struggle in behalf of the soul of man, the authoritative literature of the holy life.

XV

The Beauty of the Bible

AMONG the books that make up the carefully gathered libraries of real lovers of literature—from the handful of prized volumes which our fathers were able to secure, on through the sifted lists that comprise the "five feet of the world's classics," to the vast stores of treasured lore assembled in the famous libraries—the Bible has taken an assured and unquestioned place. So impressive is the position which it holds among the world's great books that men of eminent literary authority have not hesitated to affirm that if all the volumes now known to men could be placed in one scale of a vast balance, and a copy of the Bible in the other it would outweigh them all; or that if the hard choice were necessary between the destruction of this book and of the remainder of the literature of the race, the decision, though reluctant, would be inevitable. The world might get on without even the best of the other books, but without the Bible, not at all.

For this supremacy of the Scriptures many reasons have appeared in the course of these studies. But one more deserves consideration. The Bible includes the most beautiful of literature. Its books contain some of the most unquestioned masterpieces of writing. Its charm of poetry, narrative, spoken word and character study is un-

escapable. In lyric beauty and solemn grandeur it surpasses all other products of the pen of man. Those who have attained familiarity with its hidden treasures of word and line, and have surrendered themseves to its ever-growing attractiveness, know the sure bases on which its literary supremacy rests. There is no volume so fascinating in all the cloistered libraries where, hidden away from all but loving eyes, is kept the past's incalculable hoard.

IS THE BIBLE LITERATURE?

There are two classes of people who demur to the description of the Bible as literature. The first is that sort of literary connoisseurs whose limited acquaintance with the Bible has never given them awareness of its wonderful richness of prose and poetry. One occasionally meets such people, and finds in them the real Philistine spirit of dissent from any appreciative estimate of the Scriptures as worthy of inclusion among the great literatures of the race. For such people one can only feel the sympathy which is merited by the unfortunate who have missed something of the supreme joy of life. The second group is made up of those who are so convinced of the religious values of the Bible that any effort to bring to attention its literary beauty seems to them an act of sacrilege. They say, "This book is the Word of God. Why then reduce it to the level of your Homers, Virgils and Shakespeares by regarding it as a mere masterpiece of literature?" Here also one must keep a sympathetic mind. If the choice were really to be made

between the Bible on the one hand as the supreme work in the field of morals and religion, and on the other as a charming collection of ancient poems and narratives, then the decision would be without question. But as matter of fact, both values are found in this set of documents, and it is no discredit to the inspiration and authority of the Bible to find that it is also a collection of human documents some of which possess imperishable beauty.

Anyone who is sensitive to the appeal of great literature finds himself debtor to the great spirits of the past who have left behind them songs that live and words that burn. To enter through the gates of literature into the enchanted world of Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Sappho, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Tasso, Goethe, Moliere, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whitman, and their thousand companions of the magic pen is to touch spirits with the immortals, and catch glimpses of that light that never was on sea or land. It is even so with the Bible. It sweeps the horizon of man's life. It sounds the deep abysses of experience. In its voices are the great rolling thunder tones of destiny. Over its uplands blows the breath of new-breaking days. Out of all its sorrows there comes the calm assurance of a quenchless hope. These qualities it shares with the master books of the race, and it outreaches them all. In the field of the spirit's eternal conflict for freedom and for life the Bible stands unique, supreme. But there are quieter scenes, softer voices. There are the love of nature, the charm of moving lights

and shadows, the flocks pasturing on the hillside, and the songs of shepherds on mountain paths. Music and poetry are found in many of the modest places of this great literature. And this variation of theme and tone invests the book with an immortal beauty which the ages have not been slow to discover.

BIBLE STORIES

The stories of the Bible have become the prized possession of the children of every race. Every people has its narratives of adventure gathered about its cherished heroes. But the stories of the Bible do service for the universal childhood mind. In every generation Abraham goes out from his country toward an unknown land; Joseph is sold by his envious brothers, and by the providence of God becomes the viceroy of Egypt and the savior of his people; Moses, saved from royal persecution by the audacity of his mother, grows up to be the deliverer of his brethren, leads them across the shallows of the sea amid darkness and tempest, gives them oracles for their direction, smites the rock for their refreshing, and leaves them at last with his benediction within sight of the land on whose soil he was never to stand; Absalom, the handsome, wayward prince, rides through the streets with his chariot and fifty men to run before him, or sits with calculating friendship at his father's palace gates to win the hearts of the men of Israel; and Elijah climbs the steep sides of Carmel to confront the leagued opposition of the land and overthrow the priests of Baal, and then girds

himself, sure of the coming storm, to run before the horses of Ahab across the plain to the gates of Jezreel. "And what shall one say more? For time would fail to speak of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of heathen."

The stories of Jesus, which we know as the parables, are the most perfect gems of thought and speech in literature. Their perfection consists both in their penetration into the secrets of character and their matchless beauty of form. They are ideal materials for religious education. Children at the impressionable age are made what one wishes to make them, less by direct command than by the power of great stories. In listening to a narrative of courage, faithfulness, chivalry, virtue and sincerity the child puts himself in the place of the hero, and invests himself with his qualities. For this reason, as well as their imperishable charm, the stories of the Bible have been the chief material for the entertainment and the religious education of the race.

More attractive still is the poetry of the Bible. In fragments it breaks out from the life of early Israel in proverb and refrain, or takes more elaborate form in such war chants as "The Song at the Sea" (Ex. 15), and the "Song of Deborah" (Jud. 5). The Book of Job is one of

the unchallenged masterpieces of universal literature. It has been well said that no literary critic of any race or age could fail to include this great poem among the six greatest works of literature. Its stately prose prologue, with the swift involvement of the hero in tragedy, and the rapid hammer-strokes of fate that proclaim the four-fold disaster that befalls him; the solemn curse upon the day that betrayed him into life, (chap. 3); the shuttlelike weaving of the argument in the three-fold cycle of debate between Job and his friends (chaps. 4-30); Job's tremendous Oath of Vindication (chap. 31); the Interruption of Elihu (chaps. 32-37); the Voice of Jehovah out of the storm (chaps. 38-41); and finally the prose epilogue (chap. 42), all constitute a succession of chapters that search heaven and earth for the rich materials of argument and illustration which they lavish upon the reader. Single chapters, like the Mine of Wisdom (28), the War Horse (39), and the Sea Monster (41) are sufficient alone to place the book in the company of the great poems of the world.

VOICES OF THE PSALMS

But in the Psalms the highest levels of lyric beauty are reached. Here are the voices of poets to whom Palestine was the most beautiful of lands, and they never tired of singing its praise in their adoration of the God who made it so lovely. The starry heavens at night were almost a living wonder to poets like the men who composed Psalms 8 and 19. From the mountain tops of the long central

range they looked with awe upon the storm, which rose out of the sea like the man's hand of Elijah's seaward look at Carmel, swept onward along the mountain glens till the very cedars of Lebanon fell crashing before it, and then passed on its majestic way far out over the eastern uplands (Psalm 29). Who that has read with attention the 104th Psalm can fail to be impressed with its delight in the hills and valleys and far-stretching sea of Palestine. Not less did the singers of this great collection, which became the hymn-book of the later temple, delight in the great moments of Israel's history. Imagination plays about the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem to the singing of the 24th Psalm; or the exultation of Jerusalem over the deliverance from Sennacherib, in Psalm 46; or the departure of the exiles toward Babylon, as hinted in Psalm 42, in which the very highest levels of lyric beauty are reached; or the heartbreak and anger of captivity in the 137th Psalm; or the bitterness of Maccabean martyrdom in the 74th. Nor does one wonder that the 51st and 32nd Psalms have become the world's confessional, nor that the 90th is woven into every liturgy for the dead; nor that Luther made the 46th his own, and composed upon its lines the battle-hymn of the Reformation, nor that Cromwell taught his troops to charge to the strains of the 68th, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered."

But the Psalms were not composed alone for great occasions. They were the common vehicle of the religious life. Theirs are the voices of simple lives, as well as of

the great. All shades of experience are portrayed in this collection. In going through this anthology one passes homes where bitter sorrow has fallen; he hears the low tones of mothers hushing their children with a song of quiet trust in God; he finds saints bowed over baffling problems of seeming mistake on the part of Providence; or he joins a band of pilgrims journeying in holy joy up to the feast at the city of the great King. Psalms like these come to us not only with the emotions of their first singers, but laden as well with the gladness and sorrow of all the generations of the light-hearted or weary travellers along the roadway of the years.

"Such songs have power to quiet the restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction that follows after prayer."

And other beautiful poetry there is in the Bible, such as the Proverbs, jewels five words long, that on the stretched fore-finger of all time sparkle forever; the lovely lyrics of the Song of Songs, that panegyric of true love, rich with scented winds from gardens of spices; or the plaintive lines of dirges, like the "Song of the Bow" (2 Sam. 1) and Lamentations; or the holy gratitude of young and happy mothers over their first-born sons, as in Hannah's song of praise and the Magnificat (Luke 1). The prophets, too, have much impressive poetry. The solemn refrain of Amos, "For three transgressions of Damascus, yea for four" (chap. 1); the hopeful dialogue between Jahveh and the wayward nation in Hosea (chap. 14); the glorious

picture of peace presented by Isaiah (chap. 11); the terrifying oracles of Jeremiah regarding the approaching Scythian invasion (chap. 4); and Ezekiel's somber vision of the dead kings entering Sheol (chap. 32), are a few of many fragments of poetry which are found all along the way from the Hymn of Creation at the beginning of Genesis, past the Hymn of the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52, 53) and Paul's Hymn of Love (1 Cor. 13) to the Hymn of the River of Life at the end of Revelation.

BIBLICAL ELOQUENCE

Hardly less impressive from the artistic point of view is the eloquence of the Bible. We are accustomed to speak of men like Demosthenes, Cicero, Chrysostom, Burke, Webster and Phillips Brooks as the masters of the spoken word. Their orations and sermons have been studied by seekers after the secret of persuasive public speech. Yet judged by every canon of effectiveness, the orators of the Bible stand in a place above all other public speakers. In the orations of Moses as they are set down in the Book of Deuteronomy, the sermons of Isaiah, the burning words of John the Baptist, the addresses of the apostles Peter and Paul, and most of all in the teachings of our Lord, there are presented examples of effective eloquence which outrival all others that we know. When it is remembered that the masterpieces of oratory of which the world most speaks have been preserved to us in practically unabbreviated form, while we have to depend upon mere fragments

of biblical sermons for our knowledge of their content and movement, the contrast is still more effective.

What charm there is in the elaborate picture of the choice of a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24), an incident that is given larger space than any other in Genesis; who that has read the tender plea of Judah to the unrecognized Joseph for his little brother Benjamin (Gen. 44) has been able to keep back the tears? Is there not a strange stirring of the heart as Isaiah of Jerusalem falls into his solemn refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still," and proceeds to describe that terrible onset of the Assyrian army that shall leave the city desolate (chap. 5). The charm of the friendship of David and Jonathan is undying; the idyl of Ruth is unsurpassed in literature; the portrait of the Perfect Woman in Proverbs (chap. 31) is classic; and the seven songs of the Book of Revelation are full of stately magnificence.

BIBLICAL CHARACTERS

Beyond all other beauty, however, which this Book of books reveals, is that of character. Here in spite of all the limitations of the age in which they lived, are shown the most splendid characters in history. In sheer perfection of spirit and behavior the lives of Joseph and Jonathan excel all that we know of antiquity. As examples of courage and high purposefulness in an age which at best was far from enlightened, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah and the great prophets

who have been named make up a galaxy of brilliant and outstanding men. In the apostles and friends of Jesus a similar greatness is discovered. They are not without their limitations, but in comparison with any like number of men in history they have the precedence. And in all these regards their lives have the attractiveness which inheres in great achievement. It would be difficult to think of the world without these men. And it is in this book alone that their lives are conveyed to us. This of itself might well entitle it to the supreme place in literature. But beyond all this the one Life before which all centuries stand with uncovered head, the One whose words hang in the air like banners, and whose sentences walk through all the earth like spirits, is described only in this book. Such a life makes the crown and consummation of this book. To have spoken no other message than this would have been enough. To have painted no other face would have conferred immortality.

It is doubtless desirable that as far as possible the motive for the reading and study of the Bible should be that of interest in its ethical and religious ideals. But it must be confessed that there are many to whom these considerations make no appeal. They are not necessarily without ethical and religious concern, but they may think themselves sufficiently provided with such material from other sources. In such cases one is glad to find that the literary appreciation of the Bible provides an inducement sufficient to lead to a study of its contents. It is often true

that men and women who would not be sensitive to their ignorance of the Bible as the supreme book of religion would be ashamed to confess that they were unacquainted with the greatest of literary masterpieces. It is greatly desirable therefore that by any and all means an increasing number of intelligent people may be led to give to the Bible some portion of the attention which it demands. And no matter what the avenue of approach, whether that of literature, or history, or archæology, once in that domain of biblical literature, they are sure to meet somewhere the King face to face. For this reason it is possible to say that any sincere effort at Bible study is an act of worship.

And so it is a satisfaction to insist that the greatest of books is also the most attractive. Beyond all gratitude to God for the volume itself, as it came from the hands of its first writers, we ought to be grateful for that wealth of loving and scholarly service rendered to it through the centuries in the progress of its translation and revision as an English classic. Such passages as the Eulogy of Love (Cant. 8:6, 7), or the Vow of Ruth (chap. 1:16), or the Last Sigh of the Departing Exile (Ps. 42), or Paul's immortal Hymn of Love are not only revelations of the marvelous beauty of the Bible, but as well the disclosures of the rich resources of our Anglo-Saxon mother tongue. And this but illustrates what Macaulay has said of the English Bible—"A book which if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

XVI

The Influence of the Bible

ONE of the most learned and eloquent of American preachers of a former generation wrote of the Bible in these words: "This wonderful collection of works has taken such a hold upon the life of man as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from the land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation alike despised in ancient and modern times. It is read on a Sabbath in all the ten thousand pulpits of our land. In all the temples of Christendom is its voice lifted up week by week. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar and colors the talk of the street. Some thousand famous writers come up in this century to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed nor its golden bowl broken as time chronicles his tens of centuries passed by. Time sits as a refiner of metals. The dross is piled in heaps, but the pure gold is reserved for use, passes into the ages, and is current a thousand years hence as well as today. Some of the greatest of human institutions seem built on the Bible. Such things will not stand on heaps of chaff, but on mountains of rock."

The Bible is the most influential of books. Doubtless within the circle of their devotees other books might claim a more intense loyalty, as the Koran among the Moslems, or the teachings of Confucius among the Chinese. But in the breadth and significance of its influence, not only upon its own adherents but upon the much wider world of its outreaching control, the Bible leads all other holy books. From the beginnings of its history, tribes and nations that hardly knew of its existence were unconsciously brought under its spell by contact with its interpreters. And out into the regions far beyond the Christian frontiers today its line is going and its words are repeated.

INFLUENCE UPON LAW

Upon law and government it has exerted such an influence as no other book. If the Laws of Hammurabi, compiled in ancient Babylon, went far in their effect upon the political institutions of later civilization, including the Mosaic legislation, the institutes of Greece, and the Twelve Tables of Rome, even more significant has been the influence of biblical ethics and government upon the nations that came within their reach. The first great recodification of Roman law was made by Justinian, and was shaped throughout after the norm of biblical institutions. Upon that foundation rests the constitution of nearly every European state. The Puritans of England very nearly approached what to them seemed the ideal political program—the substitution of the Hebrew codes for all exist-

ing laws. When the fathers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony organized their little state, they decided, naively but quite seriously, to take the Bible as their constitution, "until they had time to frame a better one." And no one need be told of the influence which the teachings of the prophets and of Jesus are exerting upon governmental policies in progressive lands on both sides of the oceans. The passion for social righteousness, democracy, industrial liberty, universal education, equal suffrage, child welfare, civic purity and international brotherhood are all inspired by the Bible. The reformatory movements, which have removed much of the blight of inhumanity to children, women, criminals, and animals, of intemperance, and the social vices that gnaw at the vitals of the world, owe their inception and progress to the same book.

INFLUENCES UPON ART

In the domain of art the Bible is likewise the most influential of books. It erected the temples which were the glory of the Hebrew race and the pride of every Jewish heart. It changed Roman basilicas into Christian churches, and set a new type of architecture, which prevailed for a thousand years. It inspired the gothic cathedral, whose ascending arches and spires are symbols in stone of the heavenward-climbing spirit of worship. And it is taxing the resources of designers and builders at this moment to keep pace with the advancing needs of churches for suitable sanctuaries.

The best sculpture of the ages has been the product of genius inspired by the Bible. From Michael Angelo's "Moses" to Thorwalden's "Christ" the noblest creations in marble and bronze have celebrated the supreme characters of the Scriptures. The masterpiece of non-Christian art was the Laocoön group of the old Rhodean sculptors, buried for centuries on the sides of the Esquiline Hill, and now the pride of the Capitoline at Rome. It tells the story of the priest of Apollo who with his sons was crushed in the folds of the two serpents that came up from the deep. It is the symbol of the suffering race, caught in the embraces of the twin monsters, sin and suffering. It is the picture of the heathen world, without the hope which the Bible has brought. It is the portrayal of the long struggle, the sublime despair, the wild and weary agony of man. Christian sculpture depicts no such tragedies. Its master figures are the heroes who win, the saints who minister, and the little children who rejoice.

To the painters of all the centuries the Bible has furnished the subjects of a thousand canvasses. This was in part due to the fact that the churches were the chief patrons of art in its first days. It was also true that both the artists and their audiences were more familiar with biblical scenes and incidents than with those drawn from any other literature. But this was not the chief reason. The greatest artists have always been interpreters of the moral life. No one can be a really great artist who lacks the fundamental quality of moral and religious

earnestness. And such men have always found the best material for their messages in the biblical narratives. If it is true that the earliest painters, like Cimabue, Fra Angelico and Raphael, were limited in their subjects by the religious conventions of their age, those limitations have long since passed away. And still the great artists find their inspiration in the Bible, as one is assured by Munkaczy's "Christ Before Pilate," Bougereau's "Madonna," and Sargent's "Prophets."

And for the best music of the ages, it can hardly be questioned that it has found its suggestions and impulses in the Scriptures. The great hymns have been for the most part transcripts of biblical utterances. The majestic music of the church, with its rolling anthems and its Gregorian chants, has been the work of the Christian spirit. The oratorios like Haydn's "Creation," Handel's "Elijah" and "Messiah" are musical paraphrases of biblical themes. And even the best of the operas are profoundly religious, though their subjects may be secular, as witness Saint Saens' "Samson," and Wagner's "Parsifal."

INFLUENCES UPON LITERATURE

But more than in any other manner, the Bible has spread its influence through the common speech of the world, and has shaped both the ideas and the phrasing of the greatest literature. In whatever lands versions of the Scriptures have been possessed, they have become to large extent the standard of literary expression. We are best

able to appreciate this fact in the field of our English tongue. The greatest works in the language reveal the influence of the Bible. Chaucer, at the dawn of the day of English letters, shows the profound effect which the Bible had upon his thinking and poetry. Spenser's "Faery Queene" is really a biblical allegory. Everyone is familiar with the extent to which Shakespeare employs the Bible in the plays. This is well set forth in Bishop Wordsworth's volume on "Shakespeare and the Bible," where citations are given at length, and the statement is made that his works contain more than five hundred and fifty biblical allusions, and that not one of the thirty-seven plays is without some such reference. One recalls many passages, like the words of Adam to Orlando in "As You Like It":

> "He that doth the ravens feed,
> Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
> Be comfort to my age."

Many times in "The Merchant of Venice" the reader is reminded of the poet's familiarity with the Scriptures. And the speech of the king in the opening of "Henry IV" is an example of scores of references. Henry wishes to go on the crusade,

> "To chase the pagans in those holy fields,
> Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
> For our advantage to the bitter cross."

Milton's majestic poems, both the "Paradise Lost" and its great sequel, are but the artistic transcript of Old and

New Testaments respectively, and so constant is the biblical and classical reference and phrasing that they seem like some gorgeous fabric elaborately embroidered with the literary wealth of the ages. Byron, although he was one of the apostles of revolt against the conventions of a Christian order, yet shows frequently the influence of the Bible upon his writing, not alone in the beautiful "Hebrew Melodies," which cover so many episodes of biblical story, but as well in much else that he wrote. And even Shelley, who proudly subscribed himself an atheist, could not avoid the forms of biblical speech, as when he says of some of the literary men of the past: "Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins were as scarlet, they are now white as snow; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time."

Wordsworth's writings are saturated with biblical ideas and expressions. Matthew Arnold shares with Swinburne and Rossetti the impress of the Bible. Longfellow, Lowell and Whittier make evident the place the same book had in their education. R. L. Stevenson, Kipling and Stephen Phillips display a like acquaintance with Scripture. Readers of George Eliot's "Adam Bede," Thackeray's "Newcomes" and Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities" need not be told that these authors knew their Bibles. Scott, Hawthorne and Walt Whitman, strangers in all else, meet on the common ground of the Hebrew writings. Ruskin, the acknowledged master of English

prose style, says, "Whatever I have done in my life has simply been due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart." And with this Daniel Webster agrees when he says, "If there be anything in my style or thought to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures."

GREAT WRITERS

Emerson, both in his essays and poetry, makes frequent use of biblical ideas and sentences. And his great contemporary and friend, Carlyle, shows the same influence. For example, in "Past and Present" there is an extended simile drawn from the story of Gideon in the Book of Judges: "In very truth, for every noble work the possibilities will lie diffused through Immensity; inarticulate, undiscoverable except to faith. Like Gideon thou shalt spread out thy fleece at the door of thy tent; see whether under the wide arch of Heaven there be any bounteous moisture, or none. Thy heart and life-purpose shall be a miraculous Gideon's fleece, spread out in silent appeal to Heaven; and from the kind Immensities, what from the poor unkind Localities and town and country Parishes there never could, blessed dew-moisture to suffice thee shall have fallen." Lord Macaulay may well be ranked among the most distinguished of English writers, and great numbers of Scriptural allusions might be chosen

from his writing, of which the following may be given:

"If the English Jews really felt a deadly hatred to England, if the weekly prayer of their synagogues were that all the curses denounced by Ezekiel on Tyre and Egypt might fall on London, if, in their solemn feasts, they called down blessings on those who should dash our children to pieces on the stones, still, we say, their hatred to their countrymen would not be more intense than that which sects of Christians have often borne to each other." (Civil Disabilities of the Jews.)

"He did not perceive that, though St. Paul had been scourged, no number of whippings however severe, will of themselves entitle a man to be considered as an apostle." (Sadler's Refutation Refuted.)

"We laughed at some doggerel verses which he cited, and which we, never having seen them before, suspected to be his own. We are now sure that, if the principle on which Solomon decided a famous case of filiation were correct, there can be no doubt, as to the justice of our suspicion." (Idem.)

The frequent use of Scripture words and illustrations by Tennyson is familiar to all students of this favorite among the poets of our language. Professor Cook has compiled a volume of nearly a hundred pages filled with biblical allusions and phrases from Tennyson. These run all the way from brief allusions, like "Aramathean Joseph" in the "Holy Grail," to such passages as this from "Locksley Hall":

"Follow light and do the right—for man can half control his doom—
Till you find the deathless angel seated in the vacant tomb."

Hardly less sensitive to the Bible, though less given to

quotation, was Browning. But in many beautiful lines his knowledge of the Book is shown, as in these from "By the Fireside":

"Think, when our one soul understands
The great Word which makes all things new,
When earth breaks up, and heaven expands,
How will the change strike me and you
In the house not made with hands?"

INFLUENCE UPON CHARACTER

The supreme influence of the Bible, however, has been exerted upon character. As Coleridge says:

"In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

John Selden, an illustrious English publicist, wrote:

"I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, yet at this moment I can recall nothing in them on which to rest my soul, save one from the sacred scriptures, which rises much on my mind. It is this: 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men.'"

And William Wilberforce, the emancipator, has said:

"I never knew happiness until I found Christ as a savior. Read the Bible. Read the Bible. Through all my perplexities and distresses I never read any other book, I never knew the want of any other."

To this sentiment our own great liberator adds his testimony. Lincoln writes:

"Take all of this Book upon reason that you can and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man."

The four men who stood nearest to the outgoings of human liberty and progress were John Wyclif, the translator of the Bible; John Hus, the martyr who died to vindicate its right to be studied; Johannes Gutenburg, who first printed it, and Martin Luther, who made it the theme of his preaching. The Bible is the Magna Charta of human liberty; the Declaration of Independence from the oppression of ignorance and superstition; the Emancipation Proclamation of the soul of man. John Stuart Mill says: "The most important point in the history of liberty was the cross of Christ." Queen Victoria said of the Bible, to a visitor from across the sea: "That Book is the secret of England's greatness"; and Andrew Jackson pointed to a copy of the Scriptures as he remarked to a European statesman, "That Book, sir, is the rock on which the republic rests." William Henry Seward uttered only a mild statement of the truth when he said: "The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible." And John Marshall, our first great chief justice, affirms:

"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

XVII

Misuses of the Bible

THE Bible has had varied and strange experiences. It has run the gauntlet of every sort of hostility, from the persecutions of Antiochian and Roman tyrants to the ribald calumnies of the latest scepticism. But these attacks are of small moment. The Scriptures have never been endangered by even the most envenomed assaults. After all the centuries in which they have endured both open offense and secret detraction, they occupy today a position of impregnable strength, and take their place by the side of the race of weary and troubled spirits "like a strong man, ready to run his course."

But the Bible has suffered in the house of its friends. Indifferent to the assaults of external opposition, and unmarred by the clumsy handling of morbid-minded perverters of its contents and purpose, it is yet sensitive to the manifold misinterpretations of its spirit and meaning which ignorant piety has persisted in practicing through all the ages of the Christian society. No book has ever been subjected to such torturing manipulation in order to make it fit the Procrustian bed of erroneous systems of thinking and conduct. No document has ever been put to such painful rearrangement to make it an aid in the propagation of fantastic schemes.

The reasons for this experience are easy to trace. The Bible is the most impressive work in the world's literature. In regions where the Christian faith prevails, it is the authoritative manual of the holy life. Its assistance in the propagation of ideas or plans of activity is a leading consideration with the promoters of such plans. To enlist it as an ally is to have already half won the campaign. In this manner numberless customs, practices, institutions, notions and guesses have attempted to gear themselves into the machinery of the Scriptures in order that they might secure the power afforded in no other way. If a total catalogue of these various forms of propaganda could be given, it would more than occupy this study. One must be content with a few examples, and a word of comment upon each. From a few it is possible to judge of all.

"CITING SCRIPTURE" FOR A PURPOSE

The myriad-minded Shakespeare was an amused observer of this tendency to bring erratic and unsubstantial schemes under the protecting wings of the Bible for popular recommendation. In the "Merchant of Venice" he puts into the mouth of Bassanio a dissertation upon the tricks men employ in various areas of human interest to promote their selfish devices, and adds:

> "In religion, what damned error,
> But some sober brow will bless it, and approve it with a text;
> Hiding the grossness with fair ornament."

In the same play, in commenting upon Shylock's appeal to the story of Jacob for vindication of his own shrewd practices, one of the characters says:

> "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
> An evil soul, producing holy witness
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek—
> A goodly apple, rotten at the heart."

The cases in which the Bible is deliberately employed to recommend known errors are few in comparison with those in which well-meaning but superficial people attempt to use it in defense of enterprises in which they are sincerely interested. Occasionally, as in the temptation of our Lord, resort is had to the words of the Bible with malicious intent. But such instances are usually fairly apparent and self-correcting. It is rather the wrong ideas and institutions in which good men have enlisted, that work havoc by appropriating biblical words as their defense.

No institution is a better illustration of this principle than the once-defended practice of human slavery. From the times of imperial Rome it was everywhere recognized as a part of the established order of society. It came by inheritance into our modern world. It was practiced among Christian nations without consciousness of its unsocial character. When the mind of the American people became sensitive to the subject through the addresses of Wendell Phillips, the sermons of Henry Ward Beecher

and the pages of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the inheritors of the system turned to the Bible for defense. No one could question the fact that the Old Testament recognized slavery as a legitimate social institution in ancient Israel. On the doctrine of a level Bible, all portions of which are of equal authority at all times, the defenders of slavery had a clear case. And perhaps no experience of modern times did more to disclose the progressive character of the Bible than the contest over slavery. It became apparent that it is not enough to discover that a line of conduct or an institution is approved in the Bible. One has to go further and inquire, When—in what period of biblical teaching—did it have that approval, and can it maintain itself in the light of the highest and fullest utterances of the Scripture? Most of all must one ask, How does it stand in the light of the teachings of Jesus? By that standard alone can any system finally vindicate itself.

THE DEFENSE OF POLYGAMY

Another ancient abuse, which takes its way with reluctance into the limbo of discarded social custom is polygamy. Once it was a clearly recognized and tolerated stage on the road to progress from primitive practice to complete monogamy. Among the Hebrews it was everywhere accepted as permissible. There is no word in the Old Testament that forbids it. If a man could afford more than one wife, he was free to take as many as he chose. In spite of this fact, it is highly probable that the

usual practice was monogamy. Economic reasons usually put their own limitations upon the size of the household. Judaism was a higher stage. There polygamy was all but unknown. And such, without explicit injunction, was the practice in the early church. Probably good taste by that time regulated the marital habits of the Christian communities. None the less, the apostolic advice limits the offices of elder and deacon to such as were husbands of one wife. And very early in the history of the church polygamy ceased to be recognized as in any manner permissible.

Yet through the centuries sporadic efforts have been made in isolated communities to revive polygamy under sanction of Scripture. The total number of such efforts would run to some length. Some of them, by reason of contiguity of location, were influenced by Mohammedan practice. Some of them, in instances where the community was isolated and small, were led to the practice for purposes of rapid enlargement of the group, an early and widely recognized motive for the practices of exogamy and polygamy. In a few instances, and these strangely enough usually found in the heart of older and more progressive communities, the motive has, without doubt, been some form of moral perversion. The most conspicuous example of this practice in recent times has been the Mormon community. No one motive led to the adoption of polygamy in this case. There were many reasons why it seemed to the founders of this vigorous and persistent sect that the patriarchal practice of plural marriage was a

useful device. And there is no question that it has been deemed essential to the growth and strength of that community. Placed under ban of the law, and publicly proclaimed as no longer the practice of the body of believers, there are clear evidences that it has never been disapproved in instances where it is able to escape detection.

And what is the defense of this system? The Bible. Its apologists recall the stories of Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon, and place themselves under the protection of these worthy names of the past. To any plea that polygamy was a stage in the social progress of the race, they are deaf. God approved it, they say, in the times of these men of faith. A social system which was right in one age cannot be wrong in another. There is not the least hospitality to the idea of an unfolding or developing order of truth. The Bible is the Word of God, and all its utterances are final. Here is a view at once naive and useful. It requires no mental exertion to comprehend it, and no moral discipline to put it in practice. Wherever it is possible to assemble a company of men and women whose intelligence is limited to a mere capacity to understand the language of the Bible without the power to comprehend its larger meaning, coupled with a moral sense sufficiently primitive to be undisturbed by a practice which the intelligent portion of the race has long since left behind, it is still possible to propagate such views and to organize such groups of people. These are examples of that intellectual and moral atavism which leaves significant manifestations

on the surface of even the most progressive periods.

In precisely the same manner one might record other survivals of the early ethics of the race in the defenses of the war spirit; the lust of conquest; the practice of cruelty such as we might have supposed belonged to the dark ages of Assyrian and Tartar savagery; the perpetuation of the blood-feud; the humiliation and torture of prisoners of war; the depopulation of provinces and expatriation of their people; the defense of the drink traffic and of personal indulgence in strong drink, and other abuses too many to be named at this time. Let it be clearly understood that every one of these crimes against the social order of our time can be defended from the examples given in the Bible, provided one does not care how he uses the Bible. All these perversions of the spirit of Jesus and the ethics of our holy faith can be found in the pages of this marvelous book. And why are they there? Either as express warnings against the cruel and inhuman conduct which is portrayed, or as equally impressive illustrations of primitive morals, which it is the recognized task of the Bible to correct. Any use of the Scripture in apology for any of these abuses is due either to ignorance of their meaning or wilful perversion of their purpose.

But after all, these are minor dangers. The moral sense of the world, educated by many centuries of Christian teaching, warns away from most of these aberrations. People cannot go permanently wrong when they have in their hands the corrective instructions of Jesus and his

interpreters. There is, however, another sort of error in the use of the Bible which is more subtle, and to that extent more damaging. This is the employment of the Book as in some sense a magical or wonder-working volume, capable of performing strange and astonishing tricks in its uncanny manipulation of historical events, or its ability to forecast the future. There are people who appear quite unsatisfied with a Bible that sets forth in the convincing terms of great human experiences the mind and will of God for us, but insist that it must also show its divine origin and nature by performances like those of the fortune-teller and the clairvoyant. And so opulent is the book in its record of the hopes of troubled spirits in the past, as well as its definite insistencies upon the great verities of the faith, that even the manipulators of the marvelous and the speculators in the erratic stock of prediction, find in the corners and along the margins of this sublime literature materials on which to satisfy their craving for portent and marvel.

A few examples of this sort of misuse of the Bible must suffice. Formerly there was a discipline in the field of biblical study known as "typology." Its classic example is that massive three-volume work of Patrick Fairbairn's called "Biblical Typology." The task of this sort of study was to prove that all the events and institutions of the Old Covenant were laboriously prearranged by God to illustrate the Christian system. The warrant for this was believed to be found in the New Testament itself. The writers of that literature, particularly Paul and the author of

the Epistle to the Hebrews, lived in the midst of a society whose outstanding interest was the temple and its ritual. They wrote their messages to men and women more or less familiar with the same sort of thing. Whatever analogies, therefore, they discovered between the ancient cultus and the new faith were to that extent useful as suggestions for belief and conduct. It is one thing to perceive this truth and its pedagogical value. It is quite another thing to assert that the ancient practices of the sanctuary were devised of God for the purpose of becoming school-room apparatus for Christian education.

The serious student of history and of the Bible has only to ask himself and his sources, Where did the ancient Hebrew obtain these forms of architecture, these priestly rites and these ceremonial institutions? When he answers, as he must, if he is honest with the facts, that these forms and services were inherited or borrowed from other people, and that they can be traced almost to the last detail in these older and contemporary civilizations, his card house of "typology" tumbles into ruin. Then if he sets himself to find the real significance of this relationship of the Hebrews with older and often richer cultures, he comes to see that it is never the task of a spiritual religion to invent forms of worship. Of these the world has enough and quite enough. It is rather the work of great moral leaders to select from the wealth of older ritual and form the few customs that have permanent value for the holy life. This is what Moses and his successors did. This is what Jesus

and the apostles did. Herein lies their leadership.

If the sanctuary, the altar, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the feasts and the other elements of the Hebrew cultus were devised of God to teach men the great redemptive lessons of the later Christian faith, what shall be said of the origin and purpose of those identical structures, offices, and observances among nations much older than Israel? Doubtless there was a value in many of these forms as illustrations of features in the Christian message. But one will wish to examine well his ground before affirming that they were divinely ordered for that purpose. This has grown clearer as the facts of ancient Hebrew life and its relations with other Semitic custom have become known. And today men no longer search for deep theological meanings in the sacrifice of Abel, the crimson cord of Rahab, the boards and coverings of the tabernacle, or the scape-goat sent into the desert. Intelligent study of the Bible has thrown light upon these and a hundred other features of the older national experience as interesting, and useful for purposes of instruction, but in no sense divinely ordered or magical.

MISUSES OF APOCALYPSE

But the most fruitful field of erratic speculation is biblical prediction. In a former study attention has been given to the great forward-looking ideals of the Bible, and their realization in the advancing kingdom of God. Messianic prophecy is now understood and appreciated as never

before. But apparently this does not satisfy some of those who affirm their faith in the Word of God. Something more is needed. The Bible is believed to be a mysterious compendium of prediction, in which not only the events of the Christian dispensation were clearly foreseen and outlined, but a scheme of world history to the end of the ages was unfolded. Since the true books of prophetic character give little aid or comfort to this method of biblical interpretation, resort is usually taken to the apocalyptic works, such as Daniel and the Book of Revelation, in order to make good the effort.

Now it is precisely these books for which the church, both Jewish and Christian, has had the least use. The Jews rightly excluded the former from the list of prophetic documents, both because it was of too late an origin to be recognized in that group, and because it revealed an entirely different spirit. And the Book of Revelation, as we have seen, was excluded from most of the early collections of Christian documents, or received with question and misgiving. The reason for this is apparent to all careful students of biblical and contemporary literature today. Neither book is prophetic. But both, after the manner of that class of writings to which they belong, employ freely the devices of prediction for purposes of affording encouragement to the believers in the terrible days of Antiochian and Roman persecution. Their authors believed, and rightly, that deliverance was soon to come in the struggle of the saints against oppression. And

they exhausted the vocabulary of picturesque description in the effort to make clear that comforting truth. Soon, said the author of Daniel, Antiochus, the madman, would perish and the saints of the Most High God come to their own. Soon, said the writer of Revelation, would the Empire of Rome, lately believed by Paul to be the friend and defender of the church, but now seen to be its most dreaded foe, perish in a ruin which would be the wonder of the world. Both were pleas for constancy in the light of a deliverance near at hand.

FUTURIST EXPLANATIONS

Yet no such simple and obvious explanation satisfies those who demand of the Bible the exhibition of portent and wonder. We are told that in these mysterious books the history of the ages is unfolded. Then begins at once the search for the characters who have played or are playing their part in the drama of the world. Here the freest fancy can be indulged. There is no scheme of interpretation so erratic that it cannot find sober-faced exponents. The fathers of the church indulged the same childish habit. They looked through the gallery of vivid pictures in which the scenes of late Hebrew and early Christian experience were displayed, and professed their ability to find there the visible likenesses of Mohammed, Timurlane, and the various heretics of the mediæval age. The reformers were persuaded that one after another the popes and the enemies of the Reformation were represented by the Man of Sin

and the Little Horn. The Roman Catholic ecclesiastics of the same period returned the compliment by naming the beasts of these lurid volumes after the reformers, with Martin Luther as unquestionably the Little Horn. The commentaries on these apocalypses teem with the names of kings and cardinals, popes and emperors, generals and statesmen, philosophers and sceptics, who have been clearly recognized by one and another in the pages of these long-suffering works.

It might seem that this diversion is sufficiently harmless to pass without comment. It is certainly self-corrective and in the end self-annihilating. A few hours of real study of the Bible in the light of history and literature blows away all these vagaries like the fine dust of the balance. When once the reader of the Scriptures is willing to pay the price of sane and sober investigation of their contents, he perceives that they have other and higher purposes than to map out schemes of future events for those whose curiosity makes them willing to exchange the simple duties of the Christian life for the fantastic guesses of futuristic speculation. The authors of Daniel and Revelation deal with their own respective ages and with no other. They were not peering into any distant future. They were attempting to aid their tortured and wavering brethren to live through a present full of bitterest anguish. The speedy triumph of the right was their one hope and assurance. In this they were not mistaken. Upon that one confident utterance they lavished the treasures of

apocalyptic eloquence. And in the glowing language of hope which they thus employed, the saints of all the centuries have found comfort; not because the experiences of their own times were foreseen and described, but because that first earlier conquest of evil by good, of the world powers by the King of Saints, was the prelude and token of all future victories of the faith.

This misuse of the Bible by the attempt to read into its pages the events of our own time is sure to recur as long as the world endures. Particularly does it find its recrudescence in days of war and commotion like our own. Those who eagerly search these vivid pages of the apocalypses for descriptions of the great struggle in Europe, and for portraits of some of its chief figures, are harmlessly and happily ignorant of the fact that in every great convulsion of human society in the past there have been those who in the same spirit searched the same pages, and with the same success. There is no corrective for this waste of time except a more intelligent view of the Bible as a whole. And as this comes with the recognition of those helpful principles which are now at the disposal of every well-informed person, there will be seen less of the unprofitable search for the marvelous and fantastic, and more satisfaction in the deeper and abiding truths made known to us by our Lord and those prophets and apostles who stood nearest him in spirit and purpose.

XVIII

Our Bible and Other Bibles

THE city of Amritsar in northern India is one of the famous shrines of that land of holy places. It is the capital and sanctuary of the Sikhs, that interesting race which so long held out against English domination of their land, fought two bloody wars for freedom, and when finally subdued, was recognized by the British as a gallant and fearless enemy, and has ever since been accorded a high place among the native fighting forces in India in the service of Great Britain. Amritsar is the holy city of the Sikhs. To them it is as sacred as Benares to the Hindus, Sarnath to the Buddhists, or Mecca to the Moslems.

One of the gurus, or holy men of the Sikh faith, named Arjan, completed the great tank or sacred lake at Amritsar, and began the erection of the Golden Temple. He was the fourth guru in succession to Nanak, the founder of the movement. This man was born near Lahore about 1470, and organized a reformation of the popular Hinduism, Mohammedanism and Buddhism of his time. At his death he passed on his mission, and as he believed, his inspiration, to a successor, and the process was continued through ten such masters, the last of whom, Gobind Singh, appointed no successor, but bequeathed his authority to the Granth, the Sikh Bible.

In the midst of the Golden Temple, built on a little island in the sacred lake, on an ottoman, covered with a cloth, and guarded by priests, lies this volume. It was written by Arjan, who was a poet and mystic. He collected the extant hymns of Nanak and the other gurus of the order, as well as certain of the writings of Kabir and other saintly men, and adding his own contributions, he published the whole in a volume which became known among the Sikhs as "Granth Sahib," the "Noble Book." This work is, therefore, the Bible of a religious community numbering more than three millions. Probably it represents in a manner nowhere else approached the practice of bibliolatry. For the volume is not merely the inspired and revered literature of a race. It is literally their deity. To it have been conveyed by express stipulation the inspiration and authority of a line of heaven-sent teachers. It has become by specific and unquestionable command the visible embodiment of the divine. It is worshiped with a set and invariable ritual, which includes the rendering of selections from the hymns of Nanak, and offerings of flowers and fire sacrifices.

This is a pathetic and yet illuminating illustration of the misuses to which a sacred book may be subjected. Nanak endeavored to lead his people away from the externals of religion to a living experience of God. His followers have taken his words and those of other holy men, and made of them a god to be worshiped, not a message to be obeyed. The result is that thousands who

visit the Golden Temple and pour out their offerings for the good of their souls at the feet of the covetous priests, are as ignorant of the contents of the Granth and as indifferent to its high ideals as are the beggars that line the causeway that brings them across the lake to the shrine. This is ever the danger of the Bible, that it may be held sacred and regarded as of well-nigh magical virtue by people who could not pass the simplest examination upon its contents, and who are sure both to misunderstand and misrepresent its spirit and its purpose. The Granth is not the only victim of an erring and vicious bibliolatry.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

But whether wisely or unwisely employed, there is almost sure to be a body of literature related to each of the great religions. This fact has been the subject of frequent comment in the preceding chapters. Most of the systems of ethical and religious teaching that have made their impress upon particular ethnic groups have found expression in hymns, ritual formulæ, priestly instructions and injunctions to the faithful, and these have been gathered into an increasing collection of classic writings. Most of the ancient beliefs had something of the sort, though in certain instances the sacred literature was fragmentary and limited, and did not reach the status of canonical books.

This was the case in Egypt. As early as the fifth and sixth dynasties, two and a half millenniums before Christ,

the post-mortem fortunes of the pyramid-building kings were deemed of sufficient importance to demand the covering of the tomb walls and galleries with hieroglyphic texts which include the ritual for burial, specifications for the offerings at the tomb, magical formulæ, ritual of worship, hymns, fragments of myth, and prayers for the welfare of the dead monarch. The care taken to provide the dead with the proper credentials for their safe passage through the varied experiences of the under-world led to the compilation of several different collections of magical texts and directions, among them "The Book of Him Who Is in the Under-World," the "Book of Portals," and most important of all, the so-called "Book of the Dead," which was enlarged from time to time until it required a papyrus roll seventy feet in length for its transcription. These and other writings were regarded as classic and essential to the welfare of the soul in the future life, but were never organized into a canon of religious instruction.

The Babylonians had a large body of priestly writings, chiefly employed in the efforts to avert evil by the proper rules of magic and liturgical directions for temple usage. The nearest approach which they made, however, to religious books was in the two great epics, the Cosmogonic Story, sometimes called the Epic of Creation, and the Gilgamish Epic. The fortunate survival of fragments of these two poems makes clear the fact that they deal with the creation of the world by Marduk, the god of Babylon, the deluge experiences of Utnapishtim, the survivor of the

world-flood and the Descent of Ishtar into Hades. The close relationship of these narratives to the creation and deluge narratives of the Book of Genesis is familiar to all students of Semitic literature. In addition there are numerous litanies, lamentations over the anger of the gods, penitential psalms, and the like. Yet here again is no suggestion of a canon of religious material for popular use.

The earlier poetry of Greece was much of it deeply religious in spirit. The two great Homeric epics display a dignified and reverent attitude toward ethical and religious interests which is impressive. In the Iliad and the Odyssey alike the gods are pictured as upholders of justice and morality, though not without certain human weaknesses of temper and behavior. The same is true of the great dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In these splendid writings the lofty sentiments of the classic Greek mind came to their best expression. Nor can one fail to recognize the truly religious note in the teachings of Socrates and Plato. But there was no selected list of writings that assumed to speak with authority regarding the religious life. There was no canon of holy literature.

SACRED WRITINGS OF INDIA

With the Aryans of India there is found what may be regarded as the most ancient writings that attained the sanctity of an inspired collection. When these Aryans entered India from the northwest some thousands of years before the Christian era, they were already possessed of

a body of hymns addressed to Indra, the cloud god, Agni, the fire god, and other nature deities. The Rig-veda, the most venerable of their collections, is dated by scholars somewhere between 2000 and 1500 B. C. It consists of some 1,030 hymns, in more than ten thousand verses, and makes a book equal in size to the Iliad and Odyssey combined. Closely associated with the Rig-veda in the veneration of the Hindu, though not so widely employed, are the Sama-veda, a collection of sacred chants for temple usage; the Yajur-veda, a book of ritual for sacrifices, and the Atharva-veda, an anthology of magical formulæ for the avoidance of evil. The word Veda means knowledge, and the Vedas have been, from time immemorial, regarded as the completely inspired literature of Hinduism.

Intimately related to the Vedas in sanctity are the Upanishads, a body of writings speculative and metaphysical in character, professing to be based upon the utterances of the Atharva-veda. They are 170 in number, and from them, offering as they do such ample opportunities for mystical and philosophic meditation, the long line of Indian poets, from the writer of the Bhagavad Gita to Tagore have drawn their inspiration. From this literature were selected the mantras, or sacred texts for popular instruction, and upon it were founded the sutras, or rules and aphorisms to be stored in the minds of the devout. In the fullest sense the Vedas and the Upanishads are believed to be inspired. The Brahmins have ever taught that the truths uttered in these holy books were revealed

to ancient Aryan seers. At the same time it must be understood that the theories of inspiration varied almost as much among the Hindu sages as among the Jews. Some of them affirmed that the Vedas were eternal, and constituted the unique and unapproachable body of divine words. Others inclined to the opinion that inspiration never really ceased, and that the later classics shared this quality. Between the two extremes there is found the usual orthodox view that the Vedas and the Upanishads possess the quality of divine inspiration in a manner not to be found in other writings. They seem to express the hopes and speculations of the early Brahmins, sunk in those vast and austere conceptions of life which by the vanished stream of the Saraswati first allured the human soul.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

But the most widely known and popular of the religious books of India is the Bhagavad Gita, the "divine song," which Krishna sang to the warrior Arjuna before the great battle of Kurukshetra. In a very real sense it is the gospel of India, the story of the union of the soul with God. Of it an informed writer, Prof. Howells, says: "It is a living book, devoutly read and studied by tens of thousands of Hindus throughout the length and breadth of India. All men of light and leading in India are thoroughly familiar with its contents, and no man of culture, whether that culture be native or foreign, and whether he lives in village, town or city, neglects the study of it."

Allowing for possible exaggeration on the part of the author of "The Soul of India" in this statement, it is at least an impressive comment upon the fundamentally religious character of the Hindus, and is in sufficient contrast with popular acquaintance with the Bible among Christians. Nor must one forget the Ramayana, the epic of Rama and Sita, written by Tulsi Das about 1600, in which Rama is pictured as the complete incarnation of the divine; or the Homeric character of the Mahabharata, with its stories of the conflicts in which the gods have their part, and in which Krishna is the hero.

Closely related to the Aryan Indians were the ancient Iranians, among whom appeared one of the earliest prophetic reformers of Asia, Zoroaster. His date has been variously placed from 1000 to 650 B. C. A small group of hymns was left by this teacher, and the Gathas, a series of metrical texts, which probably also come from the founder of the new faith, who went about as a wanderer and reformer among his people. The sacred scriptures, which were gathered about these fragments, and were augmented by prophetic utterances, liturgy and ceremonial, hymns, cosmogony and tradition, were gradually assembled in a collection known as the Avesta. The date of this body of writings is assumed to be about 240 A. D. According to the tradition of the Parsees, the modern representatives of the Zoroastrian faith, the Avesta formerly contained twenty-one books. Of these but one now survives. It consists of five parts; a liturgy, the rules of

clean and unclean, hymns of various age and merit, and a collection of prayers for daily use. The Gathas are the nucleus of the first of these sections. The divine origin, character and inspiration of Zoroaster were confidently affirmed by his followers. The divine nature of the literature which bears his name is not questioned by the faithful. Few of the Parsees are able to read the classic Zend language in which the Avesta is written. But they repeat, as an act of merit, the sacred Gathas, whose meaning they do not know. Most of the essentials of that religion which proclaimed Ahura Mazda as the ever-living Lord of Light, and which was professed by the great Cyrus and his successors, have passed away. The creed of the modern Parsee is merely a recognition of the obligation to cultivate "good thoughts, good words and good deeds." The venerable figure of the reformer himself has all but vanished, and the formula: "Thus saith Zarathustra" has but a phantom of meaning.

THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

Perhaps the most conspicuous of the non-Christian faiths, the earliest to transcend the limits of a race and become international in its influence, is Buddhism. Like Christianity and Mohammedanism it has always been a missionary religion, having been carried by zealous representatives from its original home in India to Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, China, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, and in lesser degree to other parts of Asia. The founder

of Buddhism was Siddhartha, or Gotama, a member of the Sakiya clan, born at Kapilavastu, the chief town of the clan, on what is now the border between British India and Nepal, about 560 B. C. Renouncing family and comfort for the life of a wanderer and devotee, he endeavored for seven years by the usual practices of the mendicant holy men to attain satisfaction of soul, but in vain. At the age of thirty-six, sitting under a tree at Buddh Gaya, he came upon the great secret, the "illumination," in virtue of which he became henceforth the Buddha, the "enlightened." At Sarnath, a few miles from Benares, are shown the remains of the deer park in which he taught his followers. He spent more than forty years, journeying from place to place, instructing the increasing numbers of his disciples, and organizing the order that was to interpret his "way of deliverance" to the world. He died at Kusinara, about 480 B. C. among his friends and devoted adherents, and his ashes were divided among the families who claimed the right to share the honor.

The teachings of the Buddha were treasured by his disciples, transmitted orally, and finally committed to writing in the early portion of the first century B. C. They are contained in a triple collection known as the Tripitika, or "Three Baskets." They are written in the Pali language, a dialect derived from the Sanskrit, and make a body of literature about twice the size of the Bible. The three Pitakas are called respectively the

Vinaya Pitika, the Suta Pitika, and the Abhidhamma Pitika. The first is a body of ritual and rules for the early Buddhist monastic communities, and includes the commission given by the Master to his friends to go out and preach his message to mankind. The second is composed of five Nikayas, or Collections, constituting a large number of discourses and dialogues, words of the Buddha and expositions of Buddhist doctrine. These sustain to the rest of the literature much the same relation as the Gospels do to the remainder of the New Testament. The last of these Nikayas consists of fifteen sections, and includes the Dhammapada or Path of the Law, in 423 verses; the Udinas, 82 short lyrics, ecstatic utterances, or "songs of exultation," supposed to have been uttered by the Buddha at important crises of his experience; the Sutta Nipata, 70 lyrics on the secret of peace; the Gathas, psalms of the brethren and sisters of the order; the Jatakas, the most popular of Buddhist literature, a collection of birth stories, folk-lore and tradition, telling of the previous lives of the Buddha, and the merit he acquired by kindness to men and animals. The third is the philosophical elaboration of Buddhism in terms of psychology and ethics. Of these documents the Dhammapada gives the most intelligible statement of the Buddha, the Law, and the Order, the three supreme objects of reverence, celebrated in the daily confession or "Refuge," which is recited by every pious Buddhist.

These Pali books constitute the classic canon of this religion. In them are found, many times and variously repeated, the essentials of Gotama's teaching: The Four Noble Truths,—life is suffering; suffering is the result of desire; cessation of desire ends life and suffering; and this is attained by following the instructions of the Master. These instructions are given in The Noble Eight-Fold Path. This includes right belief, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and contemplation. Each of these is of course properly defined in the sources. A high level of morality was inculcated, indicated in the Five General Commandments, prohibiting the taking of life, theft, adultery, untruth, and the use of intoxicants. To these were added five more prohibitions for the members of the monastic brotherhood,—eating at forbidden times, worldly amusements, scents and ornaments, use of a luxurious bed, and taking silver or gold.

To this Pali canon, which is now preserved in the palm-leaf manuscripts of Burmah, Ceylon and Siam, many other books have been added, including a Sanskrit canon, which was chiefly a revision of the classic books in the interests of the Mahayana or liberal movement of the north, and the literature of translation and expansion which has taken form in the various lands to which Buddhism was taken from India, its original home, from which it has all but completely disappeared. The Pitikas are revered by all Buddhists,

though few of them have access to the original Pali classics. But they are not regarded as inspired in any such manner as the sacred books of several of the other faiths. They have by no means the same position in Buddhism that the Vedas have in Hinduism, the Koran in Islam, or the Bible in the Christian church. Curiously enough, although a large percentage of the followers of the Buddhist religion regard the Buddha himself as a god, and adore his innumerable statues with an idolatrous reverence, his words are held authoritative only in the sense in which those of Euclid or Plato are regarded by the learned of all the centuries since that time; they have not the sanctity of those of the Rishis to the Hindus, of those of Mohammed to the Moslems, of those of Moses to Jews, or of the utterances of Jesus and the Apostles to Christians. In Buddhism the Founder and the Order have proved much more significant than the Law.

THE CHINESE CLASSICS

Much the same is true of the canonical books of the Chinese. For centuries that run far back into antiquity, certain documents have been received as classic and regulative for public and private conduct. It may be said with emphasis that the political and religious life of China has been based upon the five canonical books, which grew out of the life and service of Confucius, and were by him transmitted to the Chinese

people. They are not regarded as inspired; they make no claim to have been revealed by any deity. But so great is the veneration of the people of that land for all that is ancient, and so conspicuous is the place which Confucius holds in their regard, that these volumes lack little of the sanction which in other lands attaches to the most authentic scripture.

Probably none of the great teachers who have taken the place of chief veneration in the regard of their people has ever exercised so profound and widespread an influence as Confucius. When one takes into account the enormous numbers of the Chinese, and the unnumbered centuries in which they have flourished in that far-extended seat of empire where they still abide, and recalls the fact that in all this time, and by practically all these people one name has held the pre-eminent place, it is not to be doubted that the influence of this man has carried further than that of any other who has undertaken to speak on the fundamental themes of human life.

Confucius, or K'ung-futze, i. e., "Master K'ung," was born in the small state of Lu, in what is now the province of Shan-tung, in 551 B. C. Most of his life was spent in the work of teaching, though at times he was called upon to serve as an official. He was possessed of an extraordinary reverence for antiquity. The state, with its immemorial history, its order and its glory, filled him with veneration. Back in the remote past

lay the golden age. To restore customs and sanctions that seemed in danger of neglect was his ambition. He counted himself in no sense a founder of a new system of ethics, much less of a religion. Indeed he expressly disclaimed any concern for religious questions, and advised his friends to leave out of their circle of intellectual concern all matters of a speculative and transcendental nature.

The five canonical books, which Confucius collected out of the wisdom of the past, are the Shu-king, or book of historical documents; the Shi-king, or book of odes; the Yi-king, or book of changes, or permutations, a manual of divination; the Hsiao-king, or book of filial piety, and the Li-ki, or book of rites. In addition there are the four books of classics, which include the Lung-yu, the conversations of Confucius, sometimes called the Confucian Analects; the Ta-hioh, or the Great Teaching; the Chang-yung, or Doctrine of the Mean; and the Meng-tsze, the instructions of the philosopher Mencius (372-289 B. C.). The latter was the greatest of the successors of Confucius. These books are all more or less associated with the name of China's great sage and teacher. The emperor Shi-huang-ti (246-210 B. C.) who thought the veneration for the past inculcated in these works was a danger to the state, made an effort to destroy them. But the success of this attempt was only partial, and they came to a more exalted place in popular regard in consequence. Since that time they

have possessed full canonical character and authority.

The sacred book of Judaism is the Talmud. It is of course based upon the teachings of the Old Testament, and embodies the traditions of the scribes from the third century of the Christian era onward. It is in two parts, the Mishnah, the first attempt to write down the scribal instructions, which had been hitherto cherished in oral form; and the Gamara, containing the later formulation of Jewish theory in the schools of Palestine and Babylonia. Space fails to permit account of several other venerable collections which in one race or another have taken their place as canonical and inspired.

THE KORAN

But the most impressive example of an authoritative, inspired and canonical literature, aside from the Bible, to be found in the world today, is the Koran, the scripture of the Mohammedan world. The story of the rise of Islam is familiar to the student of history. Mohammed was a merchant of Mecca, who became possessed of a passion for the emancipation of the Arab race from the superstitions of the idolatrous past. He knew something of the rather low type of Jewish and Christian belief and practice about him in the Arabian cities. He had a certain familiarity with the Bible from these sources. As the result of strife with his own clan, growing out of his claims to religious inspiration and leadership, he was compelled to save himself by flight with a few followers from

Mecca to Medina. This was in 622 A. D., the year which became the beginning of the Mohammedan era. The career of conquest upon which the prophet and his followers soon entered laid the entire Levant at their feet, and even threatened Europe.

In the course of his life as prophet and defender of the faith in one God, Mohammed wrote a considerable number of prayers, directions to his followers, commentations upon incidents in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and other utterances, which were gathered into a collection, and today constitute the classic literature of Islam. They are in the form of suras, or chapters, and collectively are called the Koran, or "The Reading." They are most diffusive and various. They deal with all manner of matters, historical, theological, traditional, legendary and ritualistic. They are all at the level of one mind, and were written within a comparatively brief period. Yet they are the basis for all the theology, ethics, jurisprudence and ritual of Mohammedanism. The Koran is the text-book in every Mohammedan school. It is believed not only to be inspired, as the work of the prophet's hand and brain, but as well to be the utterance of the divine wisdom, of which the prophet was made the oracle and vehicle to earth. Perhaps the theory of verbal and plenary inspiration was never carried to greater lengths than in the Mohammedan view of the Koran. To the book is ascribed every possible perfection of form and spirit. The diligence with which it is studied, and the zeal with which its teachings

are propagated are among the most astonishing features of Islam. Doubtless the glamor of the prophet's own career is cast over it in the thought of the "true believers," as Mohammedans like to call themselves. Nor can any fair estimate of the invaluable services of the prophet to his people fail to yield a high meed of praise to the entire movement for the reform of the Arabs. But one needs this background of romantic achievement to relieve the feeling of disillusionment which results from the effort to become interested in the arid and trivial pages which make up no small part of the Koran. The man and the movement remain greater than the literature they produced.

These are examples of the volumes which for various reasons have become classic and venerable among the chief religious bodies of the non-Christian world. No one of them is without its distinct merits. Each gathers to itself traditions of great souls who have wrought nobly in behalf of their people. In all of them can be discerned something of the breath of the divine, which assures us that God has never left himself without witness among any people. To the men who have poured their hearts into these hymns of the faith, and these directions for the holy life, one must accord honor and gratitude. Yet the more they are studied, and the more their writings are compared with those of our Bible, the more are we impressed with the unique character of the Scriptures which have issued from the hands of Hebrew and Christian prophets, and which find their highest levels in the utterances of our

Lord. One need not dispraise the other holy writings to perceive the greatness of our own. In fact, the more attention is given to the world literatures of religion, the more impressive becomes the character of the Bible. They are the high and purposeful aspirations of ethnic teachers who saw the truth as they were able and made it known to their people. But in the Bible there is a universal note nowhere else discovered. It is proving itself to be the message of God to the race. The Christianity of which it is the exponent is winning its way in the very lands of the non-Christian world. Their bibles are for particular peoples and limited eras. Our Bible is for every age and all mankind.

XIX

Our Faith in the Bible

THE Bible is the supreme classic of the race. It has for all mankind the value which the epic of Homer had for the Greeks, the Aeneid for the Romans, the Niebelungenlied for the people of Northern Europe, or the Mahabharata for the Hindus. If the New Testament is the Christian Odyssey, the sublime record of the soul's home coming after long wanderings, not less is the Old Testament the Iliad of the race, the epic of the long and not unsuccessful struggle against the triple-walled stronghold whose conquest alone could end the strife. In the one the hero journeys far on many seas, hears the seven voices of temptation, tarries in the lotus isles of pleasure, beholds the horrors wrought on his companions by the necromancy of sin, rouses himself to the supreme task, braves the storm, the shipwreck and the fight, goes down into the deeps of death, and comes home at last to love and glory like a king returning from his wars. In the other the field is full of fighting figures, the air is rent with shouting, the noise of battle lingers all day long among the mountains by the western sea, and the eye looks upon waving banners, charging squadrons, the flashing armor of the warriors, and the garments dipped in blood.

The New Testament is the story of the soul's achievement of freedom and of life through the power of the Highest. The Old Testament has not discovered the individual as yet, but concerns itself with the nation in its struggle for self-realization, expansion and knowledge. It is the earlier section of the volume which discloses the account of the world's spiritual education. Its utterances are preliminary, tentative, partial. Its morality is not final, its ideals are confused, its heroes are men of passion and fierce zeal. In its vivid narratives of moral struggle beasts at first are slaying men. It is only after many days that man begins to slay the beast. In the New Testament larger visions of life are secured. There one begins to catch glimpses of warriors of the faith, men close to perfection; and there is the promise of a race worthy to hold friendship with Jesus.

The Bible is thus the record of the greatest religious experience of history. It is not a revelation, in the sense of a divine deposit, placed in human hands. It is the record of an attainment of life through friendship with God. It is the history of the Word made flesh,—at first in partial and imperfect manner in the lives of prophets and sages, and later in the life of our Lord. In him that disclosure became complete, so far as human life can express it. For the Word was made flesh in a unique and final manner, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. The idea that the gods

could assume the human form and conduct themselves as men was very familiar to the people of the classic age. But in the life of Jesus that world-old myth became a reality.

It is this fact which furnishes the ground of our faith in the Bible. In it there is revealed a life which is found nowhere else in history. And the wonder of that life is its adaptability for imitation. When submitted to the test of experience, the ideal of Jesus works, in this age and every age. It is this life and its practicability for a program of imitation that makes the Bible the indispensable book of the ages. There are many questions on which it does not speak. It is not a theological encyclopedia. It is not a scrap-book of religious information. When one goes to it to ask of it trivial questions it is quite dumb and disappointing. But if one wishes to know how to find God, how to escape from sin, how to secure the friendship of Jesus, how to understand something of the mystery of suffering, and how to attain the life eternal, its pages glow with the light of divine truth. It does not publish any minute program of the Christian life, nor of the life that is to be. But it leads us to One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is the ground of our faith in its trustworthiness and finality.

There is no book in any language that is so completely saturated with a single life as is the Bible with that of Jesus. His is its central figure, and its compelling theme.

This would be sufficient to make it the most remarkable of books. But greater still is its power to produce lives like his, the crown and glory of the race.

There is both truth and error in Chillingworth's affirmation that "the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestantism." The truth lies in the fact that Christianity, as interpreted by Protestant testimony, is revealed in a book, and its fortunes are indissolubly joined with those of that book; the error consists in the identification of our holy faith with one of its instruments, although that instrument is the one most honored of all. There is little danger, however, that the Bible will usurp undue dignity. Christianity and the Scriptures go ever hand in hand. Even the prophet of Islam, whose followers have become notable for their devotion to the Koran, spoke usually of the Christians as the "People of the Book," expressing thus his knowledge of their fidelity to the Scriptures.

The Bible exhibits the striking paradox of a product greater than its producer. Historically it is the creation of the church. The Old Testament was wrought out by the Hebrew people and is the record of their religious progress from the days when polygamy, slavery and blood revenge were the common practices of the time, to the age when the highest morality of antiquity was reached. It is their religious autobiography. Yet the Old Testament is greater than the Hebrew people, for it is the product of the Spirit of God, working through choice and elect souls in that history, and is the record of

an experience which was itself, in some true sense, the manifestation of the life of God.

Viewed as a literary product the New Testament was given form and fashion by the early church. The church existed before the Book, and in a sense might be conceived as independent of it. Though the Bible had perished in early Christian persecutions, the church would have remained and its testimony to its Master would have been carried to the end of the world. Yet the New Testament is greater than the apostolic church, for it records not only the lives and words of those forceful personalities who first interpreted the gospel, but it reveals in all his glorious perfection him who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. It is the product of the Spirit of God working in the noblest souls of that apostolic church to bring forth a record which should be the trustworthy narrative of apostolic ministries and the authoritative literature of the Christian faith.

The Holy Scriptures are the supreme instrument by which Christ is revealed to men and his work directed throughout the world. Successive generations of children, readers and students advance through the experience revealed in the Book, and going on from strength to strength, appear at last before God, in Zion. Missionaries, inspired by the messages of the Bible, count not their lives dear, that they may finish

their course with joy and the testimony which they have received of the Lord. And these words of life, once more incarnate in flesh and blood, are by them re-translated into the strange speech of distant peoples, through whom the power of God is yet to be revealed.

PERILS BY THE ROAD

The perils through which the Bible has come, and out of which it has emerged with undiminished luster and augmented power, point to the divine nature of the book and the providential forces which have wrought for its preservation. The persecutions of imperial power, which threatened to sweep the church out of existence, and with it the Scriptures; the repressive measures of ecclesiastical power, which withheld the Bible from popular possession, and restricted its use to monastic seclusion; the derisive laughter of brilliant and scoffing apostles of materialism, preaching unbelief and predicting the downfall of Christian faith; and the employment of the instruments of the coldest and most remorseless criticism, whether trained and scientific, or only fantastic and reckless, have alike revealed the imperishable nature of these documents and their ability to rise phoenix-like from the ashes of every immolation.

Not less wonderful is the variety of verdicts which have been rendered regarding the origin and nature of the Holy Scriptures, verdicts which still consist with

deepening faith in their divine character and inspiration. No book has ever enjoyed, suffered and survived so many definitions as the Bible. The earliest generation of Christians received the Old Testament as a sacred heritage, safeguarded as with walls of fire by the Jewish people; the books of the New Testament were as yet regarded rather as the writings of the friends of the Lord than as Holy Scripture. The third century saw the development of canonical theory, and the elevation of the completed Bible to the seat of authority. The middle ages regarded the book as the very Word of God, and yet subjected it to such fantastic and mystical interpretations as left it but scanty fragments of reality. The reformers discovered it afresh, searched it with the passion of seekers after hidden treasure, and fearlessly pronounced upon the relative value of its different parts. The post-reformation divines, confronted with the claim of an infallible church, fell back for defense upon the dogma of an infallible Book, and unhappily in many instances, carried that dogma to extreme and untenable lengths. The critical movement has reasserted the position of the reformers as to the right of free inquiry, and has revealed the groundlessness of the fears formerly expressed regarding the disastrous results of such investigation. Yet in all these periods and by all these varying interpreters the Bible has held its place as the Word of God in the unique and authoritative sense in which the claim can be made

for no other book. And today, within the ranks of evangelical Christianity several attitudes of mind are maintained toward the Scriptures, from the definite and precise claims of complete historical and scientific inerrancy and verbal inspiration on the one hand, to the less easily defined but no less reverent acceptance of the Scriptures as the record of divine revelation to the world, a complex of documents with evident signs of human workmanship and imperfection, but marked by such spiritual unity and such divine passion as to be worthy of no lesser title than the Word of God. Men of all types within these rather wide limits find in the Scriptures ample attestation to their sufficiency as the instrument of revelation, and ample proof of the impregnable nature of the truths which they disclose.

THE GROUND OF OUR FAITH IN THE SCRIPTURES

Our faith in the Holy Scriptures rests upon their inspiration. That claim they make for themselves. Yet our belief in their inspiration rests less upon their claim than upon the appeal which they make to conscience and life. Most sacred books claim inspiration; the Bible manifests it. Of this spiritual and compelling quality resident in these documents it is not easy to summon words to form an adequate definition. Some there are who encounter no difficulty in the effort. Others stand hesitant where definition is so constantly outrun by fact. The marvelous vitality of the Scrip-

ture renders obsolete the statement of yesterday and compels the reverent to stand with uncovered head in the presence of a living power.

It is fitting that a message of such character and urgency should have an adequate embodiment. The Bible makes no claim to literary primacy among the writings of the ages, and yet its charm is imperishable. But our faith in the Holy Scriptures does not depend upon their literary excellence, though that yields never-ceasing satisfaction. It is the deeper fountains that refresh the thirsty world. Further down lie the cool waters, beyond the reach of even the masters of literature. They have not always the instruments to draw with; and the well is deep. The living water has been lifted from the depths by the hands of the prophets and apostles who speak through this Book. Into every land its streams have gone. Its ethical and spiritual influence upon the race has been beyond conception great. In every land it has been the inspiration of effort toward justice, freedom, knowledge, progress, uprightness, purity, and the fear and love of God.

"THE SUPREME AND COMPELLING VOICE"

Such and a hundred other proofs confirm our faith in the Holy Scriptures. Our most imperative task is not their defense but their study. They are less in need of apologetic than of appropriation. The greatest peril which the Bible faces today is neither persecution, suppression, ridicule or criticism. It is neglect.

Our faith in the Holy Scriptures is in the last issue the result of our faith in him of whom they speak. He is their central and commanding figure; his their supreme and compelling voice. Many teachers speak through these pages, but he excels them all. Many men have part in the drama of redemption; one alone is the Son of Man. Many have wrought as servants of God; only one as the Strong Son of God. In this book there are mingled voices of triumph and defeat, but above them all sounds one clear word, "Fear not, I have overcome." Beyond all other conquests is his victory over sin and death through which his followers are already more than conquerors. Beyond all love is his that seeks and yearns and wins at last through sheer insistence. Beyond all comfort his that tarries all the night until the day be cool and the shadows flee away.

Many reasons there are why the Holy Scriptures should have chief place in the reverence, affection and confidence of men, but the chief is that they testify of him. The Father of whom he spoke is disclosed in perfection only in him. And something of that eternity, that timeless life, which he had with the Father before the world was, abides in the Book. It rends the heavens to reveal the endless life. It sets a ladder from earth to heaven. It speaks of life with God as of a treasure on which the hand of death can never fall.

For centuries the Bible has stood as the revelation of the life and will of God. For centuries and

milleniums yet to come it will endure, as the priceless possession of the race, the inspiration of all holy living, the imperishable record of the human life of God, and the divine possibilities of man. From generation to generation it is destined to guide the church and inspire the nations. In every age new light will break out from its pages. Searching study will only reveal deeper levels of truth and richer treasures of knowledge. "Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety." "All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withers, and the flower fades. But the Word of our God shall abide forever."

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